

DAISY DALTON'S DECISION.



DAISY DALTON'S DECISION

BY

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PREFACE.

IN seeking to lay before the public this plainly-written, unpretentious work, I am actuated by the purest motives. During my life of sixty years I have oftentimes heard Christianity alluded to as being a melancholy thing, and have frequently known young people answer to such as cared for their souls: "Oh no, not yet; I want to have a little pleasure first." If I should be so happy as to disabuse one mind of the false and foolish impression that by entering the service of the Lord Jesus they shall sacrifice their pleasure and enjoyment, my effort will not have been in vain. The heroine of my story is not simply a creation of the imagination, but a living personality. In my earliest recollection of her she was an earnest young Christian worker. I have often heard her speak of the love of Jesus so precious to her heart, while her eyes filled with happy tears. Her consecrated life has been a blessed fact. The secret of her

great success has been her whole-hearted consecration to God. I leave this story in His hands, who will not despise this humble avenue through which to convey His truth.

In bringing my simple narrative before the public I desire to say, although two years have passed since writing *Daisy Dalton's Decision*, she is still living. I have borrowed names of some long since gone to their rest, but have striven to describe as far as possible the results of that early consecration. There are in Canada to-day earnest, useful labourers in the Lord's vineyard, sons and daughters of some of the first fruits of that decision. I, as one of the least of these, desire to dedicate this simple story to the young people of Canada, my adopted country.

AMELIA PANTON STROUD.

How beautiful to see
 The clustered fruit upon the bending tree !
 Yet lovelier still, the graces which adorn
 The soul that's heaven-born.
 And age does not diminish, but increase,
 The precious fruits of love, and joy, and peace,
 And gentleness, and patience ; at life's close
 Each Christian virtue more luxuriant grows



DAISY DALTON'S DECISION.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUESTION SETTLED.

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee ;
Take my silver and my gold,
Nothing, Lord, will I withhold

Adieu, vain world, adieu,
Thou hast no charms for me.

"YES, oh ! yes, this night I feel I must decide. I have been studying this matter carefully. The shadow on my dear father's face deepens. Although mamma loves us very dearly. I feel this all absorbing love of the world will prove injurious to her own health, and I am sure it is making us very unhappy. 'Delays are dangerous,' so this very night, in this very room, where you have spent so many lonely hours, Daisy Dalton, you must make your final decision."

The speaker was a beautiful young girl of about sixteen years of age. Her fine eyes shone with an unnatural excitement, the pure rosebud lips were firmly pressed together, while a look of solemn determination overspread her sweet, upturned face, as she stood gazing at the magnificent chandeliers suspended from the richly frescoed ceiling. The library in which she stood was a large, handsome room, perfect in all its appointments; the fire of Newcastle coals burned brightly, and crackled cheerily, and the finely polished grate which, together with its glittering appendages of fire irons and fenders, with the broad low rest for the feet, formed an inviting picture of luxurious ease and enjoyment, especially on such a stormy night as the one on which my story opens. The splendid skin of a royal Bengal tiger was stretched in front of the fire giving a grand effect to the homelike picture. Rich, heavy hangings draped the windows that looked out into the street, but could not shut out the sounds of the storm that was raging fearfully without. The young girl shuddered for a moment as the keen north wind blew the sleet fiercely against the windows; then turning to the fire she knelt upon the rug and pressing her hand tightly over her eyes she murmured in low sympathetic tones: "My dear father, not home yet, and you have to face the storm again this bitter night. Mamma, oh, mamma, how could you go, when you knew he wished for your presence at home, after what he told us would

be a trying day for him." A low tap at the door and a maid servant entered, followed by a huge mastiff.

"Miss Daisy, I have brought Leo for company; I am sure you must be lonesome this wild night."

Daisy replied, "thank you, Carrie, it is all right; he will be company. Be sure and have something nice and hot ready the moment papa comes in."

The maid cast a wistful glance at her young mistress as she withdrew. Daisy put her arms around the neck of the noble animal as he stood beside her upon the rug. His looks seemed to say—"You are troubled." Stroking him, she asked, "what are you thinking, Leo? The same as myself—there is no place like home such a night as this—so lie down, good dog, before the fire while I think it all out." He stretched himself upon the rug and Daisy arose to her feet. She stood a few moments in deep thought, then drew a chair close to a small writing table her father had given her for her own special use. She opened a portfolio, and taking pencil and paper she traced a line down the centre of the paper. Speaking as if addressing some person—"Come, Daisy, let us look at both sides of the picture,—one for the world, the other for the Lord."

FOR THE LORD.

I must consecrate myself wholly to the Lord, to be purified by His Spirit from all selfishness, ready at all times to sacrifice my desires for the good of others, to

confess Christ with my lips in public and in private, devoting to his service my time, my talents, my substance, and this not in part but entirely. Should sorrow and affliction be my portion, to bear it patiently, not to murmur though storms should come and clouds may lower darkly over my path, to follow my Captain whithersoever He may lead, to ever render throughout life, a consecrated service, and finally to hear the welcome words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," as I pass through the pearly gates into my eternal home. Oh! were this short life all sorrow and disappointment this would be a grand recompense.

FOR THE WORLD.

I must adhere closely to the fashions, that I must at all times be able to present myself in tasteful attire and thus command the attention and admiration of those with whom I am associated. I must learn to dance, that I may more gracefully throng the gay mazes of the ball-room. I must devote my voice to singing such songs as will make me most popular, and must at all times be ready to engage in the small talk of evening parties. I must suffer no duty to interfere with pleasure, and when I become mistress of all these necessary (?) accomplishments, I must take my position in society and shine in all the gay and brilliant assemblies of the fashionable season, must devote the night to exciting pleasure and amusements, and thus spend the

bright and beautiful hours of the morning, in feverish and unsatisfactory slumbers, only to awake with headache and feel out of sorts generally. So days, weeks, and months will roll rapidly away in one long, ever-changing scene of festivity. I shall be flattered by some, envied by others, and, perchance, loved by a few. As the season draws to a close I am expected to make a brilliant settlement. I have listened to this when paying private visits with mamma. Suppose I secure the highest prize in the matrimonial market, wealthy, handsome, and talented, what more can be desired? What matter if there remain a void in my heart. Climax—A grand wedding, a richly attired bride, jewels glittering on neck and arms, and shining like dew drops in the hair. The ceremony over, congratulations received, I am pronounced the most fortunate of my sex, fond kisses from parents, with happy tears in their eyes, last adieus are said and the waiting carriage whirls me away for a time from the gay world that has become so necessary to my existence. Established in my own home, I again take up the roll of pleasure and eagerly unfold it to its utmost limit. Years pass, and I turn with impatience from maternal duties. Days and nights are spent in one continual round of fashionable excitement, until nature shrinks from the utter violation of all her laws. The sowing time is past, the reaping time is come. What a fearful retrospect, what a gloomy future! Robbed, by suffering, of all my beauty, what avails me

now the admiration or envy of the gay world which was my chief study, my heart torn with remorse with the thought of my unpardonable selfishness, for I have disregarded the tenderest claims of nature and sought but my own gratification? For what worthless baubles have I bartered? the love of my husband, the peace of my home and my immortal soul? What is there now to comfort and sustain me in this my hour of greatest need? But it is a just recompense for such a wasted life as mine.

Daisy now rose to her feet and very attentively studied the pictures which she had sketched, then taking her Bible she sank on her knees beside the sofa. As she opened the sacred volume her eyes fell on the words "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." Then clasping her hands she raised her eyes towards heaven saying—

"I have read Thy blessed promise, and now, dear Saviour, I am just come to give myself entirely to Thee and to seal the covenant that will make me Thine forever. I crave no earthly pleasures, they cannot satisfy; but oh, give me Thy peace in my soul; oh guide me with Thy Heavenly counsel; give me grace to serve Thee faithfully under all circumstances; teach me how to comfort my dear father, he is unhappy; and I pray that Thou wilt save my beautiful mother from becoming the piteous wretch I have seen in my picture of the world. Now, oh Lord, give me some token that Thou dost accept me for Thine own Daisy."

Here her sobs choked her utterance and she remained kneeling as if in close communion with the Unseen. At length realizing her acceptance and rising to her feet, she replied as if to some one present. "Yes, my Lord and Master, it is done and I am Thine forever more."

Turning toward the fire her eyes met her father's, who had entered the room all unheard, the soft carpet giving back no sound, and so he had been a silent, unobserved, and astonished witness to Daisy's consecration. Her face was radiantly beautiful as an opening rose glittering with the fresh morning dew.

As she was folded to his heart she asked, "Dear papa, have you seen and heard all that I have done? Do not say that I have acted unwisely."

He looked very grave and clasping her closely he repeatedly kissed her sweet, tear-stained face. At length he asked very tenderly, "Daisy, my dear child, do you know, can you understand, the serious nature of the compact you have just made?"

She answered, "my dear father, I have understood for a long time, and have very carefully studied the whole matter, counting the cost and becoming convinced that it was time to make a decision. You do not wish me to become just like my dear pleasure-loving mamma. I have often noticed the look of pain on your face on finding me alone as you did this evening; besides, if there was no other motive I must do it for your sake, my dear papa, or else when I am old enough to go into society there will be no Daisy

to welcome you home, and I am sure you would miss me, papa. But there are other and more powerful reasons, for I do not intend to waste my life as a young lady of fashion. But I had forgotten for the moment, mamma gave me this for you," and she handed him a dainty little note.

He opened and read it, and with a low moan of anguish he said, "Daisy, my darling, your decision is right. May the Lord Almighty bless and keep you."

The maid now entered with the supper tray. While Daisy is waiting on her father we will go back a few years.





CHAPTER II.

PHILIP.

"Is it worth while that we jostle a brother
Bearing his load up the rough hill of life?"

THE father of Daisy was the second son of Squire Courtney, of Courtney Hall, a fine estate in one of the inland counties of England. It had descended direct from father to son for many generations, and, as the revenues were very large, and the estates unencumbered, each heir, as he became Lord of the Manor, added to its proportions, either beauty or strength, as fancy prompted; and, at the period of which I write, it was a noble pile of architecture, fit for the abode of royalty itself. Standing in the midst of extensive pleasure grounds, where many giants of the forest raised their lofty heads; where fountains and waterfalls glittered in the sunlight, and everything that art could suggest had been done to render it one of the most beautiful places in that land of noble homes.

Squire Courtney had come to the estate early in life, his father having met with a fatal accident. A few months after the death of his father he had asked

the hand of beautiful Rose Dalton, the only daughter of a wealthy baronet, whose home, "Darley Manor," lay at no great distance. The marriage took place shortly after, and was elaborate in every detail, for the young Squire was a general favorite, and the beautiful bride much admired. The festivities and rejoicings attendant upon such an occasion lasted many days. Squire Courtney was very proud of his beautiful young bride, and could daily be seen accompanying her and a number of friends to different points of interest on his vast domain. Thus a year almost passed before quiet was restored to the Hall.

Mrs. Courtney's vast fortune was placed entirely at her own disposal, being invested absolutely for her own private use. Mr. Wiseman, who had the management of the Courtney revenues, was a gentleman of unimpeachable character, and strictly Christian principles, who deservedly enjoyed the full confidence of his wealthy patron, as well as that of his father before him.

The steward, Mr. Artwell, was also an honest and trustworthy servant, and the affairs of his master prospered in his hands, even as did Potiphar's in the hands of Joseph. "The Lord blessed his going out and his coming in."

The Squire had no taste for the details of business, and it was most fortunate for him that two such strictly honest and upright men had the entire management and control of his affairs.

At the close of the year the merry bells rang out their glad peals through the keen frosty air, first to commemorate the birth of the Saviour of the world, and then to announce to the surrounding country that an heir was born to Courtney Hall. The Squire's cup of joy was full to overflowing, and a proud father was he as he stood in his magnificent library, surrounded by many of the neighbouring gentry, that had come to offer their congratulations, when the nurse entered with what appeared to be a bundle of shimmering lace, and begged leave to present to him the heir of Courtney.

The boy was baptized Francis, according to the family custom. The rejoicings were renewed at the Hall, and many humble homes were filled with good cheer by the Squire's bounty. Squire Courtney had now nothing left to wish for; he was as happy and satisfied as it was possible for a man to be whose affections are all centered in the present world, and cares nothing for the "Pearl of great price," without which the most wealthy are both poor and blind.

The young heir grew up strong and healthy, and became the idol of his fond parents, as well as of the servants of the Hall, who all vied with each other in showing him every attention; his childish fancies were all gratified and he knew no opposition. For six years he had no rival in the love of his parents or the homage paid him by all around. Petted and indulged, no wonder if at that early age he had begun to show

signs of an overbearing and selfish disposition, so when Philip, the father of Daisy was born, he was looked upon as little better than an intruder, and was treated as such. He was sent from home to be nursed through his infancy by the robust wife of one of the tenant farmers. He grew not only strong and healthy but sweet-tempered and intelligent, and bid fair to outshine his idolized brother. When old enough for a nursery governess, he returned home, but as the nursery and governess' apartments were situated in a distant wing of the Hall, he would not see much of his parents for several days together.

The lonely little child soon found a true friend in his governess, a lady of refined taste and practical knowledge, who had become reduced in circumstances and was grateful for the home offered her. She faithfully fulfilled her duties and was much attached to her young charge; and, having but one relation, at a distance, she was glad of some object on which to bestow the affections of her nature, so she was at once teacher, counsellor, and mother to the bright, interesting little fellow, who warmly reciprocated the love bestowed.

Mrs. Courtney had settled down into a quiet, home-loving, matron, seldom visiting, but preferring to entertain some of her many friends at her own home, and there was no lack of those who were always willing to accept an invitation to spend a few days or weeks amid the luxury and beauty of Courtney Hall. The

Squire was an ardent sportsman, and being the possessor of a fine stud and kennel, his company was much sought after, so between this and his magisterial duties his time was mostly spent. The heir had his own tutor and groom, and when the hours of study were over they would ride together through the green lanes and pleasant paths adjacent to the Hall, while Philip and his governess would wander to some shady nook, where, sitting side by side on some grassy bank, she would talk to him of the surrounding objects, thus teaching him beautiful lessons from nature's own book. Once he had begged for a ride on his brother's pony, but it had been granted with such evident reluctance, and annoyance that he never asked again. He would watch with great interest when the meet took place at the Hall, and his merry laugh would ring out at the sight of the well-trained dogs and horses, and the gentlemen's gay hunting coats. If his father happened to notice the smart curly-headed boy, he would run off delighted to tell his governess; this, with an occasional greeting from his mother when he chanced to meet her in company with her friends were all the tokens Philip ever received to identify him with the family. When he was at liberty to amuse himself, he would go at once to the gardener, Thomas Dawson, and ask him strange questions,—why his father and mother loved his brother so much better than they did him?—saying he would like a pony when he grew older and some one to ride with him. It became plain

to the gardener that Philip's young heart was beginning to feel sore, but the good old man never fostered any of these seeds of discontent just springing up to bitterness; but would begin to tell him the names of the flowers and show him how to arrange them for the different rooms so that he would soon forget his grievances in the pleasant occupation. He spent many happy hours with his old friend and learned many useful lessons.

So time rolled on until Philip had passed his ninth year, when he lost his best friend, his governess. By the death of her one relation she had become possessed of a comfortable income, which rendered her independent, and it was time Philip went to school. There were great regrets on both sides at parting, but the good, sound principles with which she had stored his mind bore fruit in after years.

Now the question arose, what was to be done with Philip? He was too young to share his brother's studies, and the heir had declared in a most emphatic manner, that he would have no prying youngster at his heels. In this dilemma Philip himself came to the rescue, and begged to be allowed to attend the grammar school in the town, a short distance from the Hall. His wish was complied with, and Philip soon commenced his studies at the public school. This was a great pleasure to him, as he had now the opportunity of making the acquaintance of lads of his own age, and with his pleasant face and agreeable

manner he soon became a favourite with masters and pupils.

For several years Philip remained at school giving no trouble to teachers or parents. The latter he saw but seldom; they knew he was well cared for, and never thought how often his young heart longed for a word of kindness. He would walk over on Saturday and would talk with his old friend, the gardener, but did not often enter the Hall; in fact, Philip was a stranger in his own home. At length it was thought necessary to send him to Oxford to complete his education. The heir did not wish to attend Oxford, and as from his birth every wish had been gratified, and considering he would inherit the vast wealth, there was no necessity for forcing him to perform unpleasant duties, and he seemed very much averse to study. So Philip left home without any regrets. His father had ordered a liberal supply of money to be forwarded every quarter, and his mother, as she bade him farewell, put into his hand an elegant, well-filled purse, made with her own hands, at the same time pressing a warm kiss upon his forehead, saying, "I am sure Philip will continue to be as good and true a man as he has hitherto been."

Philip's heart was full, and his eyes filled with tears as he kissed his mother's hand, saying, "Good-bye, mother; I will not disappoint you," and as he left there was in his heart a great yearning for a mother's love.

Philip highly prized the gift, but far more precious

to him were the caress and kind words spoken by the giver, the most that had ever been bestowed upon him.

As they drove to the station he met his brother in the midst of a merry group of young friends. Philip stopped to bid him farewell ; but he bowed coldly and rode on. Philip's young heart burned with bitterness, to be thus openly treated with contempt and disdain.

The last unbrotherly act appeared so inhuman and cruel, that the old coachman could not conceal his indignation, as he looked pityingly, at the flushed face of the handsome lad beside him. " Excuse me, Master Philip, but if the Bible is true, such brotherly love will meet its just reward."

Philip turned his head, and resolutely kept silence until they reached the station, and as he dropped a present into the coachman's hand, the honest fellow burst forth as his eyes grew moist, " God bless ye, Master Philip ; I hope there will be some nice friendly folk where you are going that will know how to treat you as you deserve. I feel sure that some day you will be thought more of than those who now despise you."

Philip shook hands with him, and turned away without one word, but there was a keen pain at his heart.

A little rule ; a little away,
A sunbeam in a winter's day ;
Is all the proud and mighty have,
Between the cradle and the grave.



CHAPTER III.

PHILIP, THE OUTCAST.

PHILIP verified his mother's predictions at Oxford, and soon won golden opinions from all he formed acquaintance with. He was not invited home when the long vacation came, so concluded they did not desire his presence, and remained quietly in his rooms. In the meantime he was not idle. He had found a pleasant companion, who, like himself, wished to acquire as much knowledge as possible; so together they studied law, in which both became deeply interested; together they rowed on the river; together they walked the streets and thoroughfares of the City of Colleges.

During one of those seasons, when the hearts of most students were full of joyous expectations of meeting with parents, brothers, sisters, and cherished objects of affection, Philip's friend noticed a look of deep dejection as he watched him making his preparations for going home to spend the vacation. He became convinced that there was some shadow across the young man's path, and sympathy prompted him to ask Philip to accompany him to his home among

the Devonshire lanes and groves. Philip had begun to feel very sad and desolate, and thankfully accepted his friend's invitation. In a few days they left Oxford for a while. He met with a cordial welcome, and everything was done to render his visit pleasant. But the tender solicitude of the parents for the comfort of his young friend, and the affection lavished upon him by brothers and sisters touched Philip deeply, as he remembered the scant portion of family affection that had ever been bestowed upon him, and thus a drop of bitterness was mingled with every pleasure.

On his return to Oxford he felt he must work harder than ever, to prevent himself growing morbid. So time passed on until his education was completed. He had won high honours, and a bright future was predicted for him by his many friends. The last year Philip spent at Oxford he had renewed his acquaintance with an old school mate, Lawrence Wiseman, son of the lawyer before mentioned, and they had been warmly attached to each other. Philip had decided to follow law as a profession, and had written to ask for the approval of his parents, when he was suddenly summoned home. Hastily packing his travelling bag with a few necessary articles, he was soon speeding on his journey toward all he had known of home. Why was he sent for in such hot haste? What had happened? were questions he had asked himself as the express thundered on through

the darkness. His heart grew sad and heavy as he neared the station; the carriage was there to meet him, thanks to the old coachman, who hearing he was coming, had asked to be allowed to bring him from the station. Philip looked somewhat astonished as the old man bowed respectfully, and opened the carriage door. He entered without asking any questions, so returned to his home, ignorant of what had transpired, to find his father a corpse; his mother frantic with grief; and his haughty brother, in very deed and truth, Lord of the Manor of Courtney.

The Squire had been thrown from his horse while following the hounds, he lived to speak but one word—Philip.—The strong man glorying in his strength, the rich man satisfied with his vast possessions, and looking forward to old age spent amid the splendours of his magnificent home, thinking, like many others, there is time enough yet, had made no preparations for such a sudden emergency. As the estates were strictly entailed, the young squire was absolute master of all, and there was no provision made for Philip. The word Philip, spoken by the dying father, was well understood by the heir, that he should provide for his brother, but the matter was now in his own hands and what need had he of any brother?

The funeral was over; the great man was laid to rest with many generations of departed Courtneys, and the young Squire dropped easily into his possessions. Philip's state of mind on learning there

was no provision made for him could not be easily described, as he wandered through the lonely woods, and visited the spots most dear to him; only through the memory of his faithful governess and childhood's companion. Oh! how he longed for human sympathy. Who so lonely and desolate as he? He had seen but little of his mother, she had had a very quiet and peaceful life, and his father's death was a fearful shock to her. She rarely left her own room.

Philip, for a few days, indulged in solitary rambles, and had, in a measure, brought his feelings under control, and decided to be content with a very modest portion. He longed to grasp his brother's hand and sympathize with him over their loss, but his brother had treated him with cold civility, and had striven to avoid him altogether.

Philip could bear the suspense no longer, so he requested an interview. The squire had positively decided to refuse him any portion of the vast wealth now under his own control; so feeling the sooner he made known his decision, the more quickly would he be rid of the injured victim of his unnatural resentment. When the brothers met in the library, Philip expressed a wish to talk matters over, and make some kind of arrangement for his future. Judge then what was his amazement and dismay when the heir turned upon him a look of cold disdain, saying, "*Your future!* I think you ought to be prepared for the future. Father spent a large sum upon your education, and if

he had intended you any other portion he would have so willed it, but as he made no will you have no claims upon the estate, and I may as well inform you that as soon as mother is strong enough to travel she will join a widowed relative and go abroad. Also I expect to bring home my bride in a few weeks. She is a lady of high rank, and I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I must have undivided possession of the Hall for the Lady Eleanor. And now, sir, you will excuse me as I have very important business to attend to."

Philip stood as if turned to stone. Surely his ears had deceived him, and his breath came in short gasps, he felt as if under the influence of some horrible nightmare, but as the squire walked toward the door he suddenly awoke to the fact that he was a homeless outcast, and springing across the room he faced his brother, his countenance deadly pale, with quivering lips he said, "I understand, now, Squire Courtney; your wish is that the very slight acquaintance of the past shall cease entirely. Well, be it so, I shall not miss your brotherly kindness, and you need never fear my intruding upon the presence of your high-born bride, for I will never set foot in Courtney Hall again after this day."

The Squire bowed his approval, and so they parted, never to meet again in this world. Never to have the opportunity to say, "I have bitterly wronged you; but give me your hand in token of forgiveness, and we

will be brothers yet." Oh! time, time, once gone, gone forever, beyond recall!

Philip stood and gazed around him. He had paid but few visits to this room, and now noticed for the first time its vast dimensions, the richly bound volumes, the splendid paintings that adorned its walls, and the many valuable treasures of art that appeared on every side. He stopped before a splendid picture of his father, recently painted, and his eyes filled with tears as he addressed the inanimate painting. "Oh! my father, how it would grieve you to know that your idolized son is a robber. I am discarded; I am portionless, and homeless; but I can go forth from these halls, my father, without a stain upon my name. Then stepping to a table he wrote a brief note, asking permission to see his mother. The messenger returned with the request that he should go to her at once. She had grown more calm, but looked pale and troubled; she looked pleased to see him, and invited him to sit beside her on the sofa. He pressed her hand between both his own, then gently raised it to his lips. "Mother," was the only word he could speak for some time.

"What is the matter, Philip, is there any fresh trouble?"

As soon as he could trust himself to answer, he related what had passed between himself and his brother. The recital distressed her sorely, and she told Philip he must have misunderstood, for she said,

"I am sure your father intended a good portion for you. I shall not trouble him, for my own fortune is almost untouched, but I will send for your brother and demand an explanation of his strange conduct; there must be no such person as a portionless Courtney. Mr. Wiseman no doubt knows what were your father's intentions; we will get this matter settled at once."

Philip caught his mother's hand as she raised it to ring the bell, saying, "No, mother, you shall not send for him. I know it was not intentional on my father's part, but it is a sad proof of the danger and folly of postponing a present duty. The wound my brother has inflicted could never be healed even with golden salve. I am not a dog to lick the hand that smites. I here solemnly vow that I will never touch a penny of the Courtney wealth, no, not if I were starving; neither will I bear the name, but will cast it off as I am cast off. With your permission from this time forth I am Philip Dalton. Do not fear, I will never disgrace the name. I do not wish my brother informed of the change of name; but if I can ever be of service to you, you can hear of me through Mr. Wiseman, he is an honourable man. My valise is packed and this hour I leave Courtney Hall forever."

Mrs. Courtney felt it was useless to offer any opposition to his plan, so she tried to be equal to the emergency. Opening a small cabinet she counted out bank notes to the amount of two hundred pounds,

saying as she offered it to him, "You will take this, my son; it is Dalton money, being all I have at present. If you need more apply to Mr. Wiseman; he will supply you from my own funds. I do not know the amount there is in his hands; but if you marry, and there are children, they shall be my heirs. Also, here is a present intended for your birthday, which is but a few days distant. So you see, Philip, I had not forgotten you, though I know we have all sadly failed in our duty to you and our Maker, but may His blessing rest upon and follow you, my son."

She opened a small morocco case, taking out an elegant gold watch and chain, at the same time she put upon his finger a handsome seal ring, saying, "I could not think of remaining at the Hall after what your brother has said to you, so I shall leave Courtney forever."

Philip stood before his mother a fine specimen of noble young manhood: a strong, well-knit frame; a broad and lofty forehead, around which the glossy chestnut curls clustered in rich profusion; a countenance where truth and honour shone in every feature, the eyes, which a short time before were flashing with indignation, were now soft and moist, showing plainly the intense longing of his inmost soul for human affection. Philip had become quite excited and taking his now trembling mother in his arms he pressed his lips again and again to her fair forehead and cheeks, saying, in a voice that quivered with emotion, "Dear

mother, your kindness and love have more than compensated for the loss of fortune; you have shown me you esteem me and believe in my future. When I first went to Oxford, among other rich gifts, you gave me one which has proved a life-buoy to my young heart, that has often ached with loneliness. That mother's kiss upon my forehead was my guiding star. It kept me from evil company, and I strove to become worthy of a mother's love. Kiss me again, dear mother, but on the lips this time, and I swear no word shall ever pass these lips that would make my mother blush for her son."

She looked at him in bewilderment, like a person awaking from a confused dream. Then all the neglect of the past years seemed to flash before her, and throwing her arms around Philip's neck, she sobbed "My noble boy! I see it all now; may God forgive me for depriving you of your just due: a mother's love. I did not intend to be unkind. It is a sad, sad mistake I have made."

She kissed his lips repeatedly until her emotion quite overpowered her, and she fainted in his arms. He laid her gently on the sofa, and, raising her hand reverently to his lips, he said, "farewell, dear mother, it is hard to lose you just as I have found you, for in this world we may never meet again." He hastily summoned her maid, and then went to his own room, where he wrote his mother a tender farewell note, and taking up his valise, he left the Hall forever.

He chose a path which led to the gardener's cottage. It was a scene of surpassing loveliness; trees clad in rich foliage of early summer, flowers of various kinds and colors, just bursting forth in all their new-born splendor: surely "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Sweet perfume greeted him as he passed grotto, bower and summer house, where the honey-suckle and clematis mingled in beautiful confusion; where sweet song-birds answered each other till the groves rang with melody and water-falls tinkled and glimmered in the soft rays of the setting sun. He cast farewell glances at the favourite spots he knew he would see no more.

He found the old gardener busy tying up the branches that were bending beneath the wealth of blossoms. They talked together for a short time, then Philip told him that he was taking his final farewell, saying, as he grasped the old man's hand, "Good-bye, old friend; I shall not soon forget the lesson of patience you have taught me. Your life must be very pleasant here among the roses, surely the sorrows of life can find no resting-place in this sweet spot!"

The tears rolled down the old man's cheek, as he answered. "There have been some sharp thorns in my path. Shall I tell you all about it, Master Philip? It may be of use to you in your perilous journey through the slippery paths of youth!"

Philip replied, "I am all attention."

Then the old man began, "My mother was a

widow, and I her only son. Early in life I gave my heart to a pretty young girl whom I loved dearly. I thought she returned my love. Others were seeking for her, she was the beauty of the village; so when I got the offer of this pleasant cottage and constant employment, I thought it was just the proper place for my fair young bride. I joyfully hastened to meet her at our old trysting place, and urged her to come at once and share our pretty home, and make me happy, and be a daughter to my mother. Judge then, to my surprise, when looking at me disdainfully, she said :

“‘ No, Thomas, I will not share with your mother. When I go, it must be as sole mistress.’

“It hurt me sadly, for I loved her with all the strength of my manhood. Long I reasoned with her, and told her, my dear gentle mother was longing to take her to her heart and love her as she did me; but she answered :

“‘ No, unless you give your mother another home, I will not marry you.’

“And so we parted on the spot. Leave my mother who had toiled for years to bring me up; whose life was centered in me! No! never! The thorns pierced very deep, but I resolutely trampled them under my feet, and kept in the path of duty.

“I soon heard that my false love was mistress of a splendid home in London; but in less than a year she died. There were dark rumours whispered around

that may have been true, for the man she called husband, in a very short time married a grand lady and took her abroad, leaving poor, foolish, pretty Jenny in a nameless grave.

"Master Philip, my heart often ached with unspoken sorrow, for there was a void that not even the love of a mother could fill. But time is a great healer, and our lives have passed here very peacefully. Two years ago my mother died, blessing me with her last breath. And before long I shall join her, where thorns no longer pierce; and hearts never ache; and now may God bless you, Master Philip. Keep straight on in the path of duty, and though it may be thorny, yet, like your old friend and servant, you may come to die among the roses."

One more firm clasp of the hand and Philip passed through the gate, and was on his way to the station.





CHAPTER IV.

PHILIP'S FRIENDS.

PHILIP walked briskly on till he reached the brow of the hill, then he paused to take a last look. It was, indeed, a beautiful sight. The stately mansion stood out in bold relief against the deep green of the forest. The windows looked all ablaze with the crimson rays of the setting sun, and tower and turret were alike bathed in golden glory. He looked until the splendor had vanished, and the grey shadows of twilight settled over the scene, then lifting his hat as if to cool his fevered brow, he brushed aside a tear.

"Farewell! forever," he cried as he turned his steps towards the station, "I will be no longer one of the proud race of the Courtneys, but Philip Dalton, a homeless wanderer, fighting the battles of life, but I will ever strive to keep in the path of duty, though my path may be strewn with thorns."

The train was not due for half an hour, so he walked around the waiting-room, trying to decide what course to take, when he noticed a large new map on the wall. He studied it carefully for a few minutes, and then

decided upon a fast-rising town, in the north of England.

At the ticket-office he was both surprised and pleased to meet Mr. Wiseman. Business called him to the north. As they travelled together, Philip explained his position, and Mr. Wiseman advised him as a true friend, and won from him a promise, that he would apply to him if he needed funds at any time. They agreed that all communication between Philip and his mother would be through him, also that his change of name would be kept a secret.

As Mr. Wiseman was about to leave Philip, he grasped his hand, saying, "My young friend, take the motto I began my business life with, and it will be well with you: 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths!'" Then he left the train and vanished in the darkness.

Philip felt the parting very keenly, and felt that he had looked upon the last one interested in his welfare. He remembered, even from earliest recollections, to have heard him spoken of as the soul of truth and honour. At length he became aware of intense weariness, and tried to take some rest. So well did he succeed that the train had reached what was then the terminus of the Great Northern Railway, when he aroused himself and looked around. Taking his valise he stepped to the platform, and soon mingled with the motley crowd. As a porter offered his assistance, Philip asked to be directed to some quiet hotel. He

found one, which was but a short distance from the Cathedral. Its merry chimes greeted him as he looked from the window of his room, and he remembered his famous countryman, Dick Whittington, and Bow Bells, and took it as a good omen. He retired early to rest and arose refreshed and hopeful.

It was the Sabbath morn, and as Philip revered the Sabbath day, he sallied forth and mixed with the crowds peacefully wending their way to places of worship. He soon found himself within the walls of the old Cathedral, whose chimes had rung him a welcome the previous evening. His eyes wandered around the grand, old edifice, till the opening words of the service recalled his attention. As he fixed his eyes on the minister, he remembered him as having once visited Oxford during his early college days, and that he had been specially pointed out to him as a youth of great ability and promise, and the kindly notice he had taken of him Philip never forgot.

After service was over he requested to be shown to the vestry. The good Bishop's surprise at seeing Philip was as great as it was pleasant, and he invited him to dine with himself and family. Philip thankfully accepted the invitation. Their hospitality and kindness soon made him feel at home. When the ladies had withdrawn, the kind old Bishop asked if he could serve him in any way. Philip at once obeyed the promptings of his heart, and briefly related the story of his wrongs; but giving no hint as to his

change of name. In those days there were not so many newspapers containing every item of interest, so that events transpiring a few miles distant seemed to belong to some other clime, if ever heard of at all. So Philip Courtney was as completely lost as if he had never existed, and this was as he wished it to be.

His reverend friend urged him to enter the Church, saying he would place him at once where a wide field of usefulness would be open before him. But Philip, though as near perfection as the young man whom "Jesus saw and loved," also lacked the one thing. He was fully aware of the fact, and too honourable to attempt to offer others what he himself did not possess. So he stated his reason for declining this offer, saying, "I have studied law, and now, as unlooked for change of circumstances render some profession necessary, I would prefer that to any other."

The Bishop now bestowed upon him a look of the deepest interest, and, a smile of satisfaction lighting up his benevolent countenance, he arose from his seat and taking Philip's hand, said, "I know the very place that God has provided for you. I will call for you to-morrow at ten o'clock, and I trust you will soon feel that you are neither homeless nor friendless." He then accompanied him to the door, and Philip, whose heart was too full to speak one word, pressed his friend's hand in silence and walked rapidly away. He walked on for some distance, taking no notice of how the time was passing by, till the sweet-toned chimes

of the old Cathedral, called the worshippers together for evening service, finding that he was too late to join them, he ordered a light supper, and returned to his room.

At the appointed time next morning he was waiting when a close carriage and pair, with servants in splendid livery, drove up. The footman opened the door and Philip sprang in, and was greeted with a warm clasp of the hand. "I am glad you are punctual, Mr. Dalton; it bids fair for the future."

As they drove along, the Bishop told Philip that he had an old and valued friend, in high position, who was honoured and respected by all classes for his upright conduct, in fact, he was spoken of far and near as the just Judge. His sons were all in distant lands: two labourers in the Lord's vineyard. He was getting old, and had often wished he could meet some trustworthy person, one on whom he could lean in days of weakness, and that would take the place he must vacate, at best, in a few years. One that would be upright and honest, and could take the place of a son.

But they have now reached their destination, and are ushered at once into the library, where, seated before a writing-table covered with documents, sits the venerable Judge Maxwell, indulging in a few minutes' meditation, before commencing the business of the day. A clerk was in attendance and withdrew at a signal from the Judge. Very cordial was the greeting between these life-long friends.

Philip was introduced, and as much of his history given as he had communicated. The venerable Judge looked earnestly at him, then asked a few questions, which he answered promptly and satisfactorily; then again turning to him he took both his hands in his and softly repeated, "When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord taketh thee up. The Lord has verified His words in your case, Philip Dalton; and in my own also: for He has sent me the much needed help, and from this moment I take you to my home and heart."

Philip strove to restrain his emotion, but his voice was husky as he replied: "Honoured sir, I will strive to justify the confidence placed in a stranger," and he turned his head to hide a tear, which he could not repress.

Mrs. Maxwell was now summoned, and Philip was presented to her. She looked upon him with eyes full of motherly tenderness, showing him that she was quite ready to give him the sympathy he so sorely needed. All arrangements were soon made, and Philip became at once an inmate of the comfortable mansion of the honoured and esteemed Judge Maxwell. He wrote at once to Oxford for his books and clothes to be forwarded to him. Also to his old friend Mr. Wiseman, acquainting him of the good things which had befallen him. He received a very kind reply, also tidings of his mother, who had left England for some warmer clime.

As time rolled on, Philip found that the lines had indeed fallen to him in pleasant places. Notwithstanding all the kindness lavished upon him by the good Judge and his wife, a picture of the past would sometimes intrude itself, and it was hard, for a time, to crush all the bitterness he felt; but he resolutely fought against it, and strove, by every means in his power, to show his gratitude to the kind friends who had given him such a pleasant home.

At this most important crisis of his life, he paid strict attention to business, and was already well advanced. Through the influence of his kind friends, he was soon called upon to fill a most responsible position, which he did most satisfactorily. He devoted his spare time assisting the Judge in all private matters of business. It now was well understood who would be the Judge's successor. The Judge was now seventy-five years of age, and his eyes were quite dim. Several years of constant intercourse with him had fitted Philip to undertake the responsible duties of so important a position. His upright and honourable conduct, combined with very pleasant manners, soon won for him the good opinions of the many, as well as the few who were personally acquainted with him. So Philip Dalton, the outcast, was installed in the Judge's chair, without one dissenting voice. Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell had become very much attached to him, for he had been to them as a dutiful and affectionate son, studying their comfort and pleasure before thinking of his own.

One stormy evening after Philip's promotion, as they were seated around the fire in the same library where we first met with Daisy, Mrs. Maxwell looked affectionately at Philip, saying: "Why don't you marry, Philip? Then there would be some one to love and care for you when we are gone. We are getting very near the river's brink, and will soon embark on our last voyage. You have made the last years of our lives very happy. God bless you for it! and may He give you such a partner as you deserve. We would not like to go and leave you alone."

Philip turned upon her a look of the deepest affection, saying, "My dear madam, my more than mother, I have not yet met the lady I could choose for a life partner."

Mrs. Maxwell replied, "I too was hard to suit and refused several offers of marriage. But when Ernest Maxwell, a poor, but clever, young student, crossed my path, I knew I had found my ideal. We loved each other and after a short engagement were married and went to live in cheap lodgings. I had no settled home, for I was an orphan and had visited first one, and then the other of my relatives since the death of my father (my mother having died some years previous). I had a little romance of my own, for I wished to prove if the great love he professed for me could make him happy in straightened circumstances. So I was my own maid of all work, kept my own room in order, and prepared our very simple meals.

How it rejoiced my young heart to see how contented and happy he was, and how he praised everything I did. He came home one night overjoyed and told me his salary was increased and that I should have more money for housekeeping. I had proved him to my full satisfaction, so I said, 'My dear Ernest, it is time for me to do my part.' And handing him a packet of papers told him to read them. Having done so, he took me in his arms and kissed me with quivering lips, saying, 'I should never have dared to ask you to become my wife had I known you were an heiress.' But he laughed merrily when I told him I did not intend to run such a risk, so had kept my secret. Of course we changed our abode, but he still worked very hard, making good use of his talents that God had blessed him with. In a few years he was appointed to fill the office of Judge, and, as you know, he won the highest honours and the respect of all classes. May the same be said of you, Philip, when called to render your account. But there is my husband waking from his nap and he is smiling no doubt at the trick I played him long ago."

Mrs. Maxwell continued, "I think you have never met Violet Fletcher!"

Philip replied, "No, I have not, but have often heard you speak of her?"

"She is the child of a dear and valued friend, who died when Violet was very young. After the death of my two little girls, which was the greatest sorrow

of my life, she stayed with us a long time, and the sweet little prattler in a great measure helped us to bear our loss. When her school days were over, she spent much of her time with us, but for some years she has been travelling with her father. She is highly accomplished, and superior to young ladies in general. She is now in the city, some important business having called her home, her father being still abroad."

Philip replied, "By what you tell me, Miss Fletcher must have long passed the butterfly stage of life, and be well advanced towards sensible womanhood."

The old lady answered "She is but a few years your junior, and altogether independent of her father; but," she added, with an arch look at Philip, "you are not a poor clerk like my husband, though; any lady might feel honoured by your regard."

Philip raised the hand she offered to his lips, as she bade him good-night, and he retired to think upon what he had heard.

Mrs. Maxwell had a strong desire to bring together these two persons in whom she took such a motherly interest, and the following morning despatched a loving invitation to Miss Fletcher, to come to them at once. She answered the invitation in person, and arrived just in time for tea. Finally laying aside her wraps, she joined them at the tea-table, and appeared quite at home and delighted to be with her old friends again. She was introduced to Judge Dalton, and soon was chatting merrily over her tea.

It was quite evident that the old couple were warmly attached to Miss Fletcher, and she in return gave them a daughter's affection. The meal passed very pleasantly, after which the party adjourned to the library. Miss Fletcher related several interesting incidents connected with her travels. They were all delighted with the easy, pleasant manner in which she portrayed scenes of beauty through which she had passed, or sorrows she had witnessed. Philip was very much pleased with her manner and conversation.

Miss Fletcher accompanied Mrs. Maxwell to her room, saying she would take the place of waiting-maid the first night. This pleased her very much as she wanted to speak of Philip. As soon as they were alone she asked, "Violet, my dear, what do you think of Judge Dalton, our dear, kind Philip?"

She replied, "My dear Mrs. Maxwell, I can tell you what I know of him. He is a perfect gentleman, and were it not for a certain shade of sadness, he has the noblest countenance I ever saw. Of his mental and intellectual capabilities I cannot judge, for, if you remember, I was the chief speaker of the evening. But his position for so young a man is sufficient proof."

A few more days beneath the same roof, a few more evenings spent in delightful intercourse, and Philip felt a new and strange sensation of something lacking in his life; for his heart had passed into the keeping of another. He loved Violet Fletcher. He soon declared his love and was accepted.



CHAPTER V.

DEATH.

Servant of God, well done ! through heaven the sounds are
spread,

Servant of God, well done ! thy warfare's past, thy toil is o'er ;
Visions of woe no longer dread, moon and stars thou need'st no
more,

Nor yonder perishable sun—the night of waning moons is past,
The eternal day begun.

I HAVE not attempted to describe Violet Fletcher. My pen could not do her justice. She was beautiful in form and feature, cultivated and refined in mind and manner. Philip's feelings were too deep for many words; but as he took her in his arms and pressed the kiss of betrothal upon her ripe red lips, he softly murmured, " My own beautiful Violet, hence forth to bloom for me alone."

Just then a scene passed swiftly before him. The last kiss he had pressed upon lips of a woman was that of his mother, and he seemed to see her as he laid her gently on the sofa. Again the shadow of intense bitterness swept over him.

Violet noticed this change in a moment, and placing

her hand gently on his arm, she drew him to a seat beside her. Philip, she said, "I love candor; I have no secrets to withhold from you. During my travels I have had some strange experiences. I have had several offers of marriage, and often wondered why there was no response in my heart. It is all explained now,—you were waiting for me! But, Philip, I can see there is some sorrow connected with your past life and it still flings its shadows over you. Is it too sacred for your promised wife to share?"

Philip looked tenderly at her saying, "You shall suffer no unhappiness that I can remove. He then related his early history, dwelling chiefly on the yearnings of his young heart for parental affection, and brotherly love, both of which were so cruelly refused him. He mentioned his parting with his mother, saying she was gone to some distant land, and he did not expect to see her again, but did not mention his change of name. Then he added, "my dear Violet, this subject is painful and need never be referred to again; for in this happy home with our dear friends, and you to love and care for me, all shadows must soon flee."

Violet, with her eyes glistening with happy tears, answered, "You are running a great risk, Philip, to trust the happiness of your future in my hands. I have never had a real home, I know nothing of my mother, but grew up the pet of some near relatives. After my education was completed, I was constantly

in society, both at home and abroad. I fear it will be difficult for me to become as home-loving as we would both desire."

Philip smiled and said, "Let us not anticipate evils."

Then they together sought Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell and made known their engagement. Their joy was very great, knowing that the first wish of their hearts would be realized.

Miss Fletcher left at once to prepare for her marriage, which took place shortly afterwards in the old Cathedral. The good Bishop, Philip's first friend, performing the ceremony, and the venerable ex-judge Maxwell giving away the bride. The chimes rang out a merry peal as the bridal party left the Cathedral.

As Philip had never travelled, they decided to take a tour through France and Italy. There was nothing to mar their pleasure and happiness, having perfect health, sufficient wealth, and an all-absorbing love for each other, the time flew swiftly by.

There was great rejoicing when Judge Dalton and his beautiful bride returned home. They were shown every mark of respect and esteem. Many distinguished persons had assembled to bid them welcome. Philip thanked them all for the kind reception given to his bride; but that which affected them most was the beaming countenance of their valued friends, Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell, as they conducted them to a suite of rooms all freshly decorated and furnished for their own private use. There, wishing that many happy

years might be spent together, they left them, and returned to their guests. A very pleasant evening was spent, after which they settled down to a quiet home-life. Sometimes they would all meet and spend an evening together in the dear old library, but it was evident the lamp of life was burning dim.

Life's sun a longer shadow throws,
And all things whisper of repose.

The good old Judge lived long enough to hold Philip's first-born in his arms, and laying his hand on the head of the unconscious infant, he repeated very solemnly, "May the angel which hath redeemed my life from evil, bless the boy, and may thy life be given to Him who gave His life for thee." He then returned the infant to the arms of his father, and looking earnestly at him said, "Do not deprive him of his just and full inheritance as the son of a righteous man."

Philip replied, "I do not quite comprehend your meaning; but there is one favor I would ask, will you allow us to give him your honoured name?"

Mr. Maxwell replied. "Oh, yes, with pleasure. I am just going off the stage of life, he just coming on. Philip, my dear son, for as such I love you, I often wonder at your perfect, blameless life; but, 'the heart of man is at the best deceitful,' and your own pure and honourable character will not bear you up when some unlooked-for wave of sorrow sweeps over you.

So just and true in all respects to your fellow-creatures ! So blest and honoured by God ! He has surely repaid you for your losses and sorrows. Have you given Him His due ?—your whole heart. I fear you have not ! But, you will need Him in the days to come. There are breakers ahead. Philip, make sure and get safe on the Rock ; and now, my dear son, good-night."

A short time after, the ceremony of baptism was performed by the Reverend Bishop, at the residence of Judge Dalton, and the names " Ernest Maxwell " were given to the infant. The aged Bishop prayed " that the mantle of the departing saint might rest upon him." Then the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered and partaken of, by the three aged pilgrims, and life-long friends. It was a solemn and refreshing season. From the presence of the Lord they seemed to get a glimpse within the pearly gates. They bade each other adieu, to meet no more on this side the river.

A few evenings after this, Mr. Maxwell was reclining in his easy chair, to all appearance, peacefully sleeping, his loving partner watching every movement of his restless fingers. He suddenly called out, " Daisy ! my dear wife, call the children ! "

She hastily summoned Philip and his wife. The doctor was soon in attendance, but his skill was of no avail. " The golden bowl was broken." He was perfectly calm, and in a few words bade them meet

him where partings were unknown. Then to his wife he said, "Stand by my side that I may lay my head upon your faithful bosom, its resting-place, so often, when weary."

She did as he wished; passing one arm around his neck she gently drew his head to its favourite resting-place. He spoke softly, "I cannot see you, my precious Daisy, nor can I tell you, all you have been to me through so many years. You only deceived me once, that was when I thought you were poor." Then he laughed feebly. He spoke of his sons in distant lands "bringing in the sheaves." His voice failed for some minutes. Suddenly speaking again, he said, "I have won the race just a little ahead, Daisy, and will watch for you to soon join me. The Angel of Death stands close beside me, but he is glittering with heavenly radiance. He will soon take me on his outstretched wings and bear me home."

His head drooped lower, his fingers relaxed their hold, the spirit had returned to the God who gave it.

His loved and sorrowing wife did not mourn as one without hope, but, as she pressed his cold and lifeless lips for the last time, her tears fell fast, but her face shone with a heavenly light as she softly murmured, "Farewell, for a short time, my beloved Ernest; I shall soon come home."

And so it was. She lived but a few months longer, surrounded by every token of love and affection from the two she so truly loved, then she calmly slept the

sleep of the just and went to join her husband in the heavenly home. Truly, it could be said of them: "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death not long divided."

Mr. and Mrs. Dalton felt keenly the loss of these old and valued friends. They knew that they could not look so complacently on the messenger of death, should he call for them. They both had the inner consciousness that something was lacking. But the temporary concern awakened soon slumbered, and life went on as usual, until a daughter was born. They gave her the name of "Daisy," in loving memory of Mrs. Maxwell. Healthy and beautiful were these two sweet children, and the light of their fond parents' life. A most exemplary wife and mother was Mrs. Dalton, but amid all the happiness that surrounded them the question would often come back to Philip, "Have you given Him your whole heart?" He knew he had not done so.

The children grew, and it was soon apparent that they were blessed with unusual capabilities. At twelve years of age Philip was attending a public academy and Daisy had a governess. She was thoughtful beyond her years.

The Judge was exceedingly popular and much sought after. His duties were sometimes heavy, and very painful to one of his sympathetic nature, and often called him from home.

During these past twelve years Mrs. Dalton had

seldom gone into society, and never without the escort of her husband. But now the desire for it becomes stronger and she yields. At first she is very cautious, attending only select gatherings among her most intimate friends; but the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Dalton is eagerly sought after, and soon the most brilliant assemblies are not complete without her presence. She is now completely under the spell. How she rejoiced to hear the name of her noble husband so praised and exalted among the high and mighty of the land !

So four years more passed away. During this time Philip's mother had died abroad, leaving to her granddaughter all her wealth, and a long, loving letter to Philip, telling him with what joy and thankfulness she had heard of his great success and honoured name. She too had found "the pearl of great price" and hoped to meet him in heaven. Accompanying this was a letter from Mr. Wiseman, who was now very old and had given into the hands of his son all the business details of the Courtney estate, also his change of name, saying "That the secret should be faithfully kept. The money left by his mother was well invested for the young lady until she was of age, then she would have absolute control over it."

Mr. Wiseman concluded by saying, "God has greatly honoured you, Philip, and now may I take the liberty of an old friend to ask, have you consecrated your life to Him, for His wonderful dealings with you ?

Surely it must be so. I can look back with joy and say, 'Thou hast been my Guide even from my youth up, and in old age thou hast not forsaken me.' I could not have done without Him, and now He is calling me up higher. Farewell ! my dear Philip, till we meet before the Judge of the quick and dead."

Mr. Dalton was strongly affected by this letter. It brought to mind very strongly the parting words of the good old Judge, "There are breakers ahead, Philip ; get safe on the Rock."

The evening after receiving this communication he returned home and took his tea with Daisy, as he had frequently done of late, then ordered the carriage, and went to escort his wife home from a lecture given by some great and learned professor. She was gay and sparkling, but Philip was very silent, for his heart was aching sorely. He began to feel the need of some help hitherto unknown to him.

He quite forgot to speak of the death of his mother, and all connected with it, for a season of trial was close upon him, and absorbed most of his time and attention. The assizes were soon to open with a very heavy docket. It was a terrible trial to Judge Dalton to pass sentence of death upon a fellow-creature, however low and degraded the person might be. But such a trial awaited him now.

The circumstances connected with it reminded him so strongly of his own youth, that the calm, cool, self-reliant Judge Dalton was very much troubled.

On leaving home this particular day, he said to his wife, "Violet, you will be at home to-night! I expect a very trying day and shall need all your love and sympathy to help me forget the terrible experiences I must meet."

In the afternoon, while Daisy was busy at her music, Mrs. Dalton received a note from her most intimate friend, inviting her to an evening party given in honour of their mutual friend, Professor Smart, who was suddenly called away and would leave England the following morning. Mrs. Dalton hesitated; she remembered her husband's wish; but how could she deny herself the pleasure of conversing once more with the eloquent man! She must go. Her husband would forgive her when she explained the circumstances to him. So writing a note to that effect adding, "Send the carriage at twelve o'clock, but as you will be weary, do not trouble to come yourself." She handed the note to Daisy saying, "It will be all right; after this you will have as much of me as you please."

Daisy's heart sank and her eyes filled with tears, as she watched her mother depart, saying to herself, "Oh! how could she do it! Poor papa; he will come home with an aching heart, and only Daisy to comfort him." She felt that now was the time to make her final decision.



CHAPTER VI.

THE TRIAL.

Hard names at first, with threatening words
They are but noisy breath ;
But grow to clubs and naked swords,
To murder and to death.

LET us now look for a few minutes into the crowded court-room, where Judge Dalton looking pale and troubled is listening to the most painful case that ever came before him.

In the felon's dock stand two young gentleman of about twenty-two or three years of age; whose every motion, as well as appearance, denote high birth.

We will condense the evidence: A country gentleman had two sons, making an idol of the son and heir. The second son thought himself neglected and complained bitterly of the partiality shown. His father answered him angrily saying, "He was not fit to breathe the same air as his brother, but only a fit companion for gamblers and scoundrels generally, and bade him begone till he could behave like a gentleman."

This was the spark that set in a blaze all the pent

up passions of jealousy, so he left his father's presence to pour his imaginary wrongs in the ears of another scion of a noble house; who was already far advanced in wickedness. Together they plunged into every vice, until their fathers refused to pay their gambling debts, or advance any more money. So, in the back room of a low tavern, over a pot of ale and a pack of greasy cards, the plot is formed, to murder the idolized heir, declaring he would then pay all debts and share with his companion.

They procured masks and clubs as quickly as possible, and followed him as he returned home through the park rather late.

His path led through a thick grove of laur ls: here they suddenly sprang upon him, and beat him to the ground. Their diabolical work was soon accomplished, the first blow rendered him unconscious. There was no cry for help, no struggle for life, no foot-print in the dry green sward, all was quickly over. They thought they were quite safe.

Striking across the most unfrequented part of the park, they reached a gate leading to a wide common. Here they stopped in the shadow of a clump of trees to arrange their plans. On the opposite side stood the game-keeper watching for a very troublesome poacher. The footsteps arrested his attention, and, leaning forward to listen intently before making his appearance, the first word convinced him that it was not the poacher. In astonishment he listened to the

words, "He will not be found till morning, then we shall be safe." They would meet at a place well known to both, and enjoy themselves with the money they had taken from the victim's pockets, until the next heir was enquired for. Then their money difficulties would be over, for they would share alike. With a low scornful laugh they parted and walked off in different directions.

The game-keeper knew them, but thought best not to interfere, for two such villians would have no hesitation in clubbing him in such a manner that his evidence would be lost, and most likely his life.

As their retreating footsteps died away in the distance he moved forward to the spot where they had stood, and noticed something leaning against a low bush; which proved to be the clubs with which they had committed the frightfu' deed. He left them, just where they were found, and started for home.

Arousing his two sturdy boys of fourteen and sixteen, they went at once in search of the body. After finding it they hastened to the mansion to give the alarm. The father in his wild grief accused the game-keeper, who quietly asked to be taken before a magistrate, which was soon done. He told his tale, and where the murderers would be found, and before the following midnight they were safely lodged in a prison cell. The trial was now taking place. There was no disputing the evidence, and a verdict of 'Guilty' was given without any appeal.

The judge then put on the black cap, and, with white lips, read out the solemn sentence of death. They were then removed to their cells to await the day of execution.

The judge was so greatly agitated that he could scarcely gain his private office; where he sat for some time unable to move. He then laid aside his robes, and felt that he had worn them for a last time. He entered the carriage that was waiting to convey him home. His mind dwelt painfully on the trial and verdict of the day. He asked himself, "How was it that my own unhappy youth did not end like theirs? Surely, I had reason to complain!"

Then the picture of his loving, faithful governess and all she had taught him came to his mind. Also, his old friend, Thomas, the gardener; and he remembered how every complaint taken to him had been turned aside and some blessed lesson of fortitude taught. He remembered too, the last time he had met his brother and his cruel words. How his heart did ache!

He now reached home, never doubting for a moment but that he would find his wife and Daisy waiting to attend him with loving care. But, as he entered the library, he found Daisy alone, as we have before related.

Daisy hovered tenderly about him, coaxing him to take some refreshments and trying to comfort him. But his heart ached with the thought that notwith-

standing his honourable career and blameless life he had not made God his refuge; and now his own strength had utterly failed him. Surely he was getting among the breakers.

He ordered the carriage and entered it to bring home his wife. He had never permitted her to come home alone. The night was bitterly cold and the sleet swept past in blinding clouds. The mansion was all ablaze with light; the hum of merry voices reached his ear.

It was but a few steps to the carriage, but a cloud of sleet struck Mrs. Dalton with terrible force, and she trembled as she seated herself by her husband's side. Turning to him, she began to apologize, saying she would respect his wishes and stay at home in future. He could not reproach her.

He had intended this evening to have told all his history to his wife and daughter, at the same time acquainting them of his mother's death and Daisy's inheritance. As they were leaving the carriage another terrific blast struck them, and both trembled violently as they mounted the steps to their home. Disappointment added to the Judge's already overwrought nerves, seemed to completely paralyze his tongue, so he was very silent, and the intelligence he had intended to impart was postponed.

Two days later the beautiful Mrs. Dalton was in the grasp of a terrible brain fever. The doctor ordered perfect quietness or he could not answer for the con-

sequences. Mr. Dalton was in a distressing state of mind and wandered from room to room, seeking rest but finding none. He would pay frequent visits to the sick-room. The wild ravings of his wife, who in her delirium, talked of the talented men and women she had met, of the brilliant scenes she had witnessed. Then with a wail of anguish she would cry "Oh! forgive me that last cruel act." Her beautiful glossy hair was all gone, and the wild glitter of her eyes made him shudder. His tender loving words were of no avail. There was not a gleam of reason.

In those days of trial Daisy was everything to her father. One day after a visit to the sick-room, he entered the library, and seating himself in an easy chair he called Daisy to him. Putting his arm around her he asked, "My darling, have you asked your Lord and Master to spare your mother, or at least to restore her reason? Should she die before I can assure her of my forgiveness it would indeed be more than I could bear."

Daisy replied, "Is He not your Lord too? He could help you, papa."

He replied with a groan, "I have done without Him all the best of my days and how could I ask His help, now I am in trouble? If, like you, I had given Him my heart in youth I should now be able to call upon Him."

Daisy looking at him said, "Why, dear papa, this is just the time, if you feel your need of Him. But

let me read what the great men in olden times did, when in trouble." She opened her pocket Bible and read, "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and brake their bands asunder. Oh! that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men." "Now, dear papa, does not this meet your case?" She stood before him with swimming eyes saying, "This is the spot where I gave myself to Him. Oh! let Him burst your bands asunder and deliver you out of your distresses just here!"

He arose from his chair, and he and Daisy knelt together. On that sacred spot he made his humble confession of past neglect and a full surrender of himself to Daisy's Lord and Master. The fountains of the great deep of his soul were broken up. His speech was incoherent but it was all understood, and his name was written in the Book of Life. This was the first fruits of Daisy's decision.

No word was spoken by either of them as they arose, but after a warm, clinging embrace they retired to their rooms.

The next morning the physicians said the crisis was approaching, and they had but slight hopes of a favourable issue. Mr. Dalton had, like one of old, been wrestling till the break of day. He now looked very grave, but Daisy, taking her Bible read, "Whatsoever

two or three shall ask in my name I will do it." And she said, "His promise is given and we can claim its fulfillment." Then the father and daughter knelt together and pleaded earnestly for the life of wife and mother, till Daisy, springing to her feet, cried out, "Oh! it is all right! The same low, sweet voice that brought me peace, has just told me our prayers are heard, and our request will be granted."

Her father kissed her tenderly and then left the house. He directed his steps towards the city gaol. The highly-esteemed Judge Dalton had no difficulty in gaining admission.

The condemned men were in cells adjoining each other. There was a strong iron grating in the heavy partition so that they could speak, but there was no possibility of them reaching each other, for they were heavily ironed and strictly guarded.

Mr. Dalton found them stern, hard and bitter against God and man. He told them he had no power to help them, for their sentence was just, but he felt deeply for them and wished to be their friend. The past, they knew, could not be recalled, but he urged them to humble themselves before God and to seek pardon and peace from Him who alone could help them in this hour of need. They listened in perfect silence. Then in earnestness he sank on his knees and besought the Lord to soften their hearts.

Judge Dalton on his knees, in tears, pleading for them! Oh, blessed human sympathy; it opened the

flood-gates of their souls, and, with tears of penitence, they made a full confession of their crime, expressing great regret for their wasted lives. He read to them that portion of Scripture that Daisy had found for him.

Once again he visited them and found them quiet and subdued. Before leaving he obtained a promise that they would write and tell him the state of their minds on the last night allotted to them upon earth, saying, "There was a dear one at home who had power with God that would pray for them." He bade them farewell with a sorrowful, yet lightened, heart, and then hastened home.

He told Daisy of his visit and the promise they had made. At set times they went to the library to plead with God for the condemned men, till hope sprang up in both hearts. True to their promise there came to Judge Dalton letters full of the warmest thanks for his sympathy for them, saying, "Had it not been for him, they would have died hardened and impenitent, for they had never thought of God as a being to be worshipped; but now they had told Him all about it and cried to Him in their trouble and he had delivered their souls out of bondage. They begged His Honour to be comforted on their account, for though, in duty, he had passed the sentence of death upon them, he had brought them the 'glad tidings' of life eternal, and the scaffold had lost its terror."

At eight next morning the prison bell tolled out the

death knell and Daisy and her father knelt in the library, praying that strength might be given at the end, and their prayer was answered. When it was all over Mr. Dalton, turning to Daisy, said, "Nothing in this world ever gave me such complete satisfaction as carrying the message of mercy to those two perishing souls. These letters will be prized as some of my greatest treasures. But, my dear child, how God is honouring your whole-hearted service; but for you I could not have gone to visit them, and I fear they would have died in their sins."

Daisy replied, "Well, papa, He is just keeping His promise, 'They that honour me them will I honour.'"

During this time there has been little change in the sick-room; Mrs. Dalton lies helpless and almost lifeless since the fever left. They are now summoned to her bedside, and the physician tells them to stand just where she would see them if she opened her eyes, but they must not speak.

The physicians look grave and have very little hope that she will recognize them.

They look at each other in amazement when they see Daisy and her father looking so calm and peaceful as they take their place beside the bed of what they firmly believed to be the dying wife and mother, as though watching for her to awake from some happy dream.

They had not long to wait. A faint quiver of the lips, a gentle sigh, a twitching of the eyelids, and she

opened her eyes to look upon her husband and daughter. There was not a sound in the room. Again the eyelids drooped, then unclosed again. The lips parted and in low pleading tones she said, "Philip, forgive."

He could not be restrained, but with one step he was at her side, and taking the wasted hand he softly pressed and kissed it, speaking in earnest, loving words, "My precious wife! Oh, God, I thank Thee for this."

One single tear found its way and glittered like a pearl through the long, dark lashes. No breath came through the parted lips.

After watching her some minutes the old doctor looked reproachfully at Mr. Dalton, saying, "It is all over. I feared it would end like this."

He answered quietly, "Will you watch one hour with us?" A look passed between father and daughter and both hearts went up in silent pleading.

Daisy could scarcely keep from repeating aloud, "She is not dead, but sleepeth."

For some time they watched. Philip still held the hand he had taken, while the doctor held the other. He shook his head. "There is no hope," he whispered.

Still they waited! At length there was a slight pulsation, then a quivering of the eye-lids, and once more the eyes opened, now clear as the morning sunlight. Then she spoke once more saying. "I have slept very late and have had a strange dream."

The doctor now came forward and administered a cordial, saying, "You must sleep again, dear madam, then all will be well." She was soon sleeping peacefully, her breathing now audible and regular.

A very skilled physician from a distance, who with the family doctor had watched the case with the greatest interest, remarked on taking leave. "By all the laws of nature Mrs. Dalton should have died, indeed I believe she did, but by what miracle she lives I cannot say." Then turning to Daisy, "Miss Dalton, I believe you have found the key to the fountain of life; but her whole system is too terribly shattered *ever* to regain health, unless you can work another miracle." And indeed it was so, for a long time elapsed before she could speak more than a few words at a time.





CHAPTER VII.

INFLUENCE.

Do not linger with regretting,
Or, for passing hours despond,
Nor the daily toil forgetting,
But look eagerly beyond.

MR. DALTON soon resigned his position of judge. A deputation waited on him at once begging him not to give up the office which he had filled with such entire satisfaction. But he remained firm, for he felt that he could not endure to be again present at such a painful scene as the last trial proved to be, the memories of which would remain with him to the end of life. But above all, he wished to devote as much time as possible to his suffering wife, who was still very weak.

Daisy and her father still met in the library to plead "that God would temper the wind to the shorn lamb." It was not thought advisable to send for Ernest during his mother's illness as she would not have known him, and since her return to consciousness every precaution had to be taken to prevent any excitement in the house, for fear some sound might

penetrate to the sick-room, but the "commemoration" was close at hand, and all who are acquainted in any degree with the city of colleges, know that this is the usual round of festivities before breaking up for the long vacation.

The holidays brought home the son and brother, whom all longed to see. He was now a tall, handsome well-formed, young fellow, his eyes and hair several shades darker than his father's.

Ernest was very much distressed on entering the sick-room to see the change sickness had wrought in his mother. She was so bright and blooming when he last saw her, and now as she reclined among her pillows she looked like a broken lily. Her long black lashes were glistening with pearly drops of affection, as those three loved ones stood around her bed.

After one half hour spent in loving intercourse, it was necessary for them to retire. Ernest to his room to refresh himself after travelling, Daisy and her father to pay their daily visit to the library. After making their request to the Lord, Daisy took her father's hand and laying her head lovingly on his breast she said, "Papa, have you noticed any change?"

He replied, "Yes, there is a change, but I cannot describe it."

"I can tell you what it is," she answered. "Mamma has had a heavenly visitor, and the Sun of Righteousness hath risen with healing in His wings, and all is well with her soul."

Before he could reply a party of gentlemen rang the bell and requested to see Mr. Dalton. Daisy withdrew as her father received them into the library.

They were representatives for the city and county, who begged his acceptance of a magnificent time-piece as a token of the high esteem in which he was held by all classes, and they expressed great regret that he who had discharged the duties of that office so faithfully should now suffer in health and spirits. They also bore letters of sympathy for the severe illness of his highly-esteemed wife.

Mr. Dalton was very much surprised, but in a few words expressed his acknowledgement of the honour shown him. Then with many kind wishes for his future happiness the gentlemen withdrew.

After the deputation had taken leave he stood for several minutes in profound thought, and as he looked upon the handsome memorial, he felt deeply humbled, exclaiming, "Oh! Time, Time! thou art a witness against me. Yet how much time have I ever given to my Maker? I have lifted up my voice in the great congregation, and was satisfied that I had done the same as others. Oh! Eternal God, what poor returns for all Thy loving care shown to me, and in raising up for me such true and faithful friends. Yet, how long I delayed in seeing a Heavenly Father's hand in all this, but leaned to my own understanding until I was fairly among the breakers; but now Thou hast set my feet upon the rock. My first attempt to speak in Thy

name and the blessed result make me mourn over lost opportunities."

Taking from his breast pocket the letters received from the unfortunate young men now gone into eternity, without fear of meeting their Judge, he read them over and over again, as he fervently thanked God for the hope he saw there. Then placing them beside the splendid memorial just presented, he gazed earnestly at them.

Daisy entered at this moment and at a glance she comprehended what was passing in his mind. She gave him a tender sympathetic look, saying, "I see what you are thinking of, papa—of how much more important the sacred relics of the dead are than the splendid token of regard from the living."

He answered, "You are quite right, my dear child, and while I value very highly the esteem of my fellow-men, far more precious to my heart is the remembrance that the message 'which was sown in weakness, was raised in power.' Oh! Daisy, to know that they both died trusting in Christ for salvation is more to me than all the gold and silver in the world. But you were speaking of your mother when we were interrupted. What are your hopes concerning her?"

Daisy answered, "Just watch, and you will soon notice that there is now no sorrow or anguish in mamma's beautiful eyes; no lines of pain around her mouth. And I believe from the very tone of her voice, that all is well with her."

Her father clasped her in his arms, saying, "My precious comforter, what happiness your words give me, and how beautiful and complete is your confidence in your Lord and Master."

Then Daisy placed her hand upon his arm and led him into the sick-room. Mr. Dalton looked in silent wonder at the happy light that shone in his wife's eyes. There was a look of placid content upon her countenance, as if she had not a wish ungratified. After half an hour of pleasant conversation, they left the invalid's room together and entered the library.

Then Daisy said, "Well, papa, what is your impression?"

He replied, while his eyes grew moist, "The angel of the covenant has paid her a visit and left behind a heavenly radiance. Oh! praise the Lord for this new mercy."

Daisy stood in silent meditation for a short time; then turning to her father she asked, "Papa, shall we now take Ernest as the subject of our daily petitions? I have watched him and am convinced that all is not right with him. He is very restless, and sometimes gives me the impression that he has been tempted, and has yielded to the temptation. Papa, I cannot bear the thought of my noble brother wasting his life and the talents entrusted to him in sin and folly. Dear papa, we will now plead the fulfillment of the promise for our beloved Ernest."

A rising in his throat prevented Mr. Dalton from

answering, and she continued, "He is going to take me for a long drive into the country, and I intend to take the opportunity to speak to him. Have I your permission to speak of mamma's illness, if it is necessary, in the course of our conversation? I will be discreet."

He replied, "I have perfect confidence in your discretion and there must be no reserve between us. I have a very important communication to make to you both upon which I wish to ask your opinion."

Brother and sister paid a short visit to the gentle sufferer who would never again enjoy the fresh country breeze; then they started for their drive. The day was lovely and all nature seemed to smile upon them. As they drove along Daisy was considering how to introduce the subject so near her heart, when Ernest suddenly turned his face to her, saying, "I cannot comprehend you, my dear sister. Will you explain to me why you are so unlike other young ladies; never murmuring at the very quiet life you lead, and not appearing to have any desire to mingle in the amusements so dear to most young ladies of your age?"

Daisy replied, "I can easily explain, and will gladly do so. The amusements and pleasures of the world seem to me to be very unsatisfactory. When quite a little girl I have often listened to the frivolous conversation of the ladies who have visited mamma, and wondered if the best subject they could find to

talk about was dressing to the best advantage, going from one scene of gaiety to another, criticising the conduct of those with whom they had been associating, till it often ended in no less than slander. As mamma began to go oftener into society, I had many lonely hours which I spent mostly in study. I was too young to attend anything but a young people's party. To some of those I have gone occasionally, but the foolish chatter, the envy, if one was better dressed or excited more admiration than others, and so many other things, made me feel that if this was the end and aim of life, what a miserable failure it all must be, for those things could never satisfy me. Mamma was by no means gay or frivolous, but was much admired for her great power of conversation. Indeed, she was quite a favourite with all, but I have often noticed how weary and languid she appeared next day. How sad papa would look when he came home, and after waiting probably some time would order the carriage to escort mamma home. You know some of his duties were very painful, and he would come home from the court house greatly agitated. I was trying hard in those days to understand what *was right*. Mamma seemed now to have grown fond of the fashionable world. The sorrowful look on papa's face grieved me very much. I have an idea of my own that there is in his past history some terrible memory. Before the last assizes came on he was very sad. On the last day of the assizes he expressed a

wish to find mamma at home, saying there was a very trying day before him and he would stand in need of all our love and sympathy, but the temptation came from her most valued friend, and after some hesitation she yielded to it. I was so sorry to see her go, but decided then and there not to live for the world and its pleasures, but offered myself wholly to the Lord Jesus, to live my life entirely in His service. His heavenly voice soon spoke peace and comfort to my troubled spirit. When I arose from my kneeling position, there stood papa, all unnoticed by me. He had been a silent witness to my consecration to God. Mamma had ordered the carriage for twelve o'clock, but at eleven papa started to fetch her home. It was the bitterest night I ever remember. Coming from the heated room to the carriage mamma took a chill, and, together with regret that she had not complied with papa's wishes, she was soon in a terrible fever, from the effects of which she has never recovered. For several days papa was almost distracted with grief, but at length, feeling the burden too heavy to bear, he brought his sorrows and laid them at the Master's feet, and He has given him strength to bear what, ¹ fear, would otherwise have completely prostrated ^u. The shock has been a very severe one, and there is the sad certainty that mamma can never regain her strength. She is given back to us for a time and a purpose. I believe she has a sacred mission to fulfil."

Ernest had listened with the deepest interest to Daisy's recital, then turning upon her a look of unbounded admiration, he asked, "Have you not over-rated your own powers, my sweet sister? You are what we Oxford fellows call a raw recruit; you have just entered the service, you meet with no opposition, your surroundings are pleasant and peaceful. Think you it will be all right when you are called into active service? Have you no fears of failure?"

Daisy answered, smiling, "Oh, no, my dear brother. When engaged in active service we are most secure, for we are marching directly under our Captain's guidance. Papa once asked me 'if I could endure poverty for my Master's sake.' I am so entirely His that I can bear anything which He knows is best for me."

Ernest answered, "Well, Daisy, you have shown me the possibilities of life as I never saw them before. I will give this subject my most serious consideration. I thank you from my very heart that you have made it so clear, that it would be quite impossible for me to misunderstand you. But here we are at home. The time has passed quickly and pleasantly."

Daisy's sweet face was all aglow with health and happiness as she greeted her father, saying, "It is all right, papa, I have no doubt but Ernest will soon join us. Then we shall all have taken service with the King."

Mr. Dalton replied, "Yes active service for Ernest

and yourself, and I too may be useful; but poor mamma, what can she do? Nothing but suffer, I fear."

Daisy looked earnestly at her father as she replied, "What can mamma do? Why! perhaps more than the rest of us, and win more jewels for her crown of rejoicing by patient suffering than we can by active service. Yesterday, Mrs. W—— was allowed to see her for half an hour, and when she left I attended her to the door. She could scarcely speak for her tears, as she said, 'I feel as if I had been in the presence of an angel.' Such seed as she will sow in a sick-room will bear a rich harvest."

Mr. Dalton looked at her in perfect amazement, but Ernest coming in at that moment he made no reply.

A few more days went by, and in the meantime, according to his promise, Ernest had well weighed the whole matter. He knew better than anyone else that he stood in need of a safeguard. After conversing together for a few minutes Ernest suddenly turned to his father, "Will you answer me one question, sir? and believe me when I say it is no idle curiosity that prompts me to ask it."

Mr. Dalton replied, "I will gladly give you any information in my power."

Ernest spoke earnestly. "You have but recently become a Christian, yet I have heard you spoken of as living a pure and stainless life; you have risen to an honourable position which you have nobly filled for a number of years."

Ernest paused, being at a loss to express himself. His father came to the rescue, saying, "And you wish to know, my son, how this could be possible without Christianity? Very recently I have asked myself that same question. But while my character was without blemish before the world, my heart was not right in the sight of my Maker. But you will both understand it better when I relate the history of my life. I have been wishing to do so, and no time could be better than the present."





CHAPTER VIII.

MR. DALTON'S HISTORY.

DAISY and Ernest paid strict attention while Mr Dalton related the principal events of his childhood and youth. He was deeply moved as he spoke of the great longing there was always in his heart for parental and brotherly love, and how great was his disappointment, what bitter thoughts filled his young heart, and what sad fruits they might have borne but for the faithful friend of his childhood, the good old gardener and his beloved governess. He felt that her lessons had been of great importance in framing his character, and of keeping him from much evil.

He told them it was the custom among the general rejoicings at Christmas to give presents to all in the house—"Christmas boxes," so called. "Mine," he said, "was a packet of picture books; my dear governess had selected them. They were to be sent home along with many other things. Whether by accident or not was never known, but inclosed in my packet of books was a pack of playing cards. I was very much pleased with them and would often amuse myself with them, till one day my governess came to me and

taking the cards laid them out in rows, telling me their names, saying at the same time, 'That boys who learned to play with them often grew very fond of them, so much so, that when they became men they would waste much time and money. Even fathers would spend money, while their wives and little children at home would be hungry. They would drink and grow quarrelsome, and would even shoot or stab each other, and sometimes after losing large sums of money would even take their own life.' Then she put her arm around me and drew me close to her, saying, 'My Philip will never use those things if he intends to grow up to be a wise and good man, as I think he will.' She then told me several stories of homes lost, of broken-hearted parents, and of sons and daughters brought to ruin, and of shameful deaths on the scaffold—and all the result of gambling with cards. When she had finished, she looked at me, with tears in her eyes saying, 'And now, what says my dear little Philip?' I stooped to the table and gathered them all up in a heap and put them in her hand, saying, 'There, will you please burn them for me? for I will never, never touch cards any more, nor will I ever taste anything that will prevent my growing up a wise and great man.' With her eyes shining through her tears, she took my hand and pointing upward said, in a most solemn voice, 'The great God who made us and to whom we belong has heard your sacred promise, and now, my dear Philip, will you

promise *me* as well? It will save you from many snares and temptations, and will make me very happy to remember this when I can no longer see you.' I readily gave her the promise, repeating it over and over. That promise has been faithfully kept, and it has indeed been my safeguard against evil company. Steering clear of these two evils, drinking and gambling, I found it was not very difficult to gain the respect and good-will of those with whom I came in contact. When I was cast adrift on life's ocean I was determined to steer straight through its waves, however boisterous they might be. But I never fully realized how much I owed my governess, till I heard those two unfortunate young gentlemen, who so lately forfeited their lives, confess that it was the love of gambling that had brought them to such an untimely and disgraceful end. No words of mine can describe what my feelings have been over that sad affair. When I look back and see what I have escaped! The dear old couple who so kindly gave me a home were a hundred times more to me than father or mother, but still there was a great craving for the brother's love which had been denied me. After I met your mother, and my public duties became so numerous, I thought less of those matters. Your mother, as you both know, was very much admired both for her beauty and accomplishments. She had sufficient wealth to allow her to follow the dictates of her heart or fancy. Her father was a very wealthy gentleman, and she his

only child. She had travelled with him for several years. Some important business called her to England, leaving her father in Germany. Our engagement was very short, and when Mr. Fletcher heard that his daughter was happily married, and he had lost his travelling companion; though he was far advanced in years, he formed other ties, and never returned to England."

Mr. Dalton continued, "I believe, my son, that your sister has told you all concerning recent events. It is too painful for me to dwell upon. I have given up the office I held. I have done with the world. I crave no more of its honours or rewards. I know your mother cannot stay with us long. I therefore wish to devote myself as much as possible to her, and when she has gone beyond the reach of suffering to her eternal rest, I intend to retire to some spot where I can best serve my Master and benefit my fellow-creatures.

"I will now inform you, Daisy, that you will have ample means to do all that is in your heart. To feed the hungry and carry joy and comfort into desolate homes and hearts, and even to do, as I have heard you express your desire, to carry the Gospel to heathen lands. Just before the commencement of your mother's illness, I received intelligence of the death of my mother, and she has bequeathed the whole of her fortune to you, her grand-daughter. It is well invested and increasing rapidly under the careful

management of our faithful friend Mr. Wiseman. At the age of twenty-one years you will have absolute control over it. This being the case, my son, I shall be able to allow you a moderate income for the present. Now, my dear children, you know my history, I ask for your candid opinion. Will it be right for me to tell your mother, that I did not give her my proper name?"

Ernest and Daisy both sprang to their feet and stood before him, both eagerly answering, "Oh, no, no, papa."

Mr. Dalton replied, "Give me your reason, Ernest."

He thought for a moment, then said, "One reason, you have vowed never again to bear the name of Courtney; you have made honourable the name of Dalton. I am well content to remain 'Dalton' to the end, and I think we all love dear mamma too well to cause her any useless regrets; besides, others not knowing your history might put a wrong construction on your conduct."

"But what says Daisy? I have no doubt but she will give us the right answer to this all-important question."

Daisy answered readily. "If there had been any wrong done to any one, then reparation would be necessary, but as matters stand, I think it would be very unwise, if not positively cruel, ever to allude to it in any way whatever, in mamma's state. It may give rise to unpleasant suspicions which may destroy

her peace of mind, and darken her remaining days. She thought very highly of the name she bore. I have often heard her remark that she would not change it for the highest title in the land. Let her have it to the end."

Her father looked at her earnestly for a moment, then turning to Ernest he said, "Daisy has decided rightly, she always does. And now, my dear children, as this cause of uneasiness is removed, I shall be more composed, and will try to forget the past as far as it is possible."

Daisy clasped her arms around her father's neck and gave vent to the tears she could no longer restrain. For several minutes she stood pressed to his bosom, then wiping her eyes, which shone with a heavenly lustre, she exclaimed, "Oh! papa, it was very cruel to deprive you of the love of an only brother; but you could not understand that the Lord Jesus was offering His heavenly love to fill the void in your heart. Though you would not accept it then, it has followed you through life, and kept you from many evils, until now. In the hour of your greatest need you have accepted that love, so freely offered, and which will more than compensate for any earthly loss you may sustain. But I think, dear papa, Ernest has something to say to you before we separate."

Ernest arose and stood before his father. "I have a confession to make, my dear and honoured

father, and I am sorry to cause you a moment's pain, but I trust the pain will be of short duration while the pleasure will continue as long as life shall last. When I first went to Oxford my only ambition was to become famous. I worked hard, and, as you know gained the favour and confidence of my superiors. But I did not understand that it was absolutely necessary to gain complete control of myself. I formed friendships, like other young fellows, and frequently met and spent the evening in one or other of our rooms. I remembered I had never seen card-playing at home and so for several weeks was content to look on. I did not drink wine for some time, but after a great deal of entreaty and some jeering, which was hard to resist, I yielded, and was soon quite willing to learn that which engrossed so much of my companions' time and attention.

"There was one of our party who stood firm against all temptations and who tried to dissuade me from it, but once begun, it soon possessed a great attraction for me. I have lost all the money I had, but had enough honour left not to get into debt. Before I reached home, I felt I had started on the downward track and there was not much likelihood of my ever being distinguished for anything great or good. When I saw you so changed and sad, my heart was filled with shame and sorrow, and I determined to confess to you, at the first opportunity, and to ask to be removed to some other college. I then began to watch Daisy,

expecting to see her very dissatisfied and fretful on account of the very quiet life she was obliged to lead because of mamma's sickness. I have noticed her tender devotion to dear mamma, her constant cheerfulness, the look of settled peace upon her countenance, and the beautiful light in her eyes. I have gone with her on her visits to the poor and have seen the pale face light up with pleasure and the dim eye brighten at her approach. I soon became convinced that she was living her life for a grand and noble purpose.

"When she told me, with your consent, of the terrible ordeal you have undergone at the spring assizes, oh, how my heart ached for my past folly; and now, since I have heard from your own lips your sad and strange history, how truly do I sympathize with you! I humbly crave your forgiveness for the pain my confession must give you, but, have no fear for the future, for, thanks to the pure, unselfish love and consistency of my dear sister, all things in life are changed forever for me. I have given myself, body and soul, to the Lord Jesus, to use my substance as well as my life in His service; and, dear sir, if it meets with your approval, I will at once change my course of studies from the law to the Gospel, that I may go in His name and strength and work among the poor and neglected of my fellow-creatures."

Mr. Dalton had grown deadly pale, but before Ernest had finished his confession, a happy thankful look overspread his countenance, and, grasping Ernest's hand,

which he pressed warmly between his own, he answered, "My dear son, you have my full and free forgiveness, and I thank God you went no farther in the downward track. I will gladly agree to the change of studies you purpose, for I desire nothing so much as to know that you are a faithful soldier and servant of the Lord Jesus. Earthly pomp and pleasure sink into insignificance compared with the knowledge that our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and with Jesus as our pilot, He will steer us through the breakers, safe into the land beyond the rocks and quicksands of time. My dear son, let us thank God for this most precious daughter and sister, through whose decision we are both brought to seek that which the highest position in the world could never give, 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding.'"

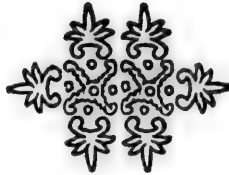
Daisy threw her arms around her brother's neck and wept for very joy. He kissed her fondly, then all knelt to seal the solemn three-fold covenant; a life-long consecration to the eternal God.

Daisy now retired, and Mr. Dalton and Ernest continued some time in conversation. In the course of their conversation Ernest asked, "Do you know the work Daisy is doing among the servants?"

Mr. Dalton replied that he did not.

"Why she is holding regular weekly service, and has provided a book for them to put down their names, when they are ready to take service with her Lord and King. And all have put down their names; and

so instead of wrangling and jealousy, there is peace and good-will among them. The coachman told me this, adding, 'She has been a very angel of light to us all.' Oh ! how I wish I were to begin work at once ; she will far outstrip me."





CHAPTER IX.

MRS. DALTON'S DREAM.

VERY happy were the days that followed, but the time was fast approaching for Ernest to return to Oxford.

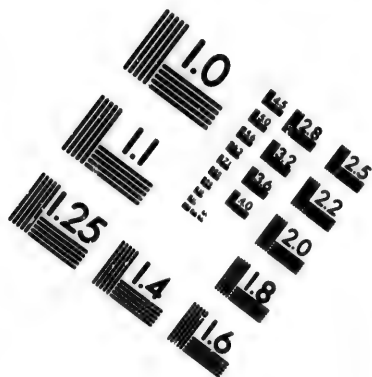
Just previous to his leaving Mrs. Dalton expressed a wish to have tea served in her own private sitting-room. She could now be wheeled from one room to another. Reclining among her pillows she looked very pale and was almost helpless, except her hands.

Her beautiful glossy hair was beginning to grow again, and her large, lustrous eyes shone with a light not of this world. Daisy waited upon her very tenderly helping her to such dainties as she could partake of.

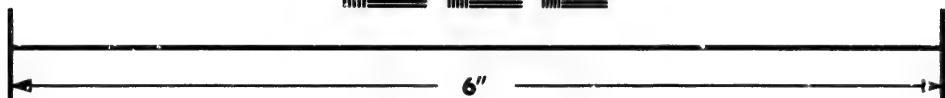
The lovely invalid looked upon each member of this small family, while a happy smile lit up her beautiful face, exclaiming, "Oh! but this is very sweet, a faint type of our blessed re-union in the heavenly home. I am going first, but we shall all meet there by-and-bye."

Mr. Dalton replied, "This knowledge would be perfect happiness were it not for your suffering, my beloved wife. Oh! why could——"





A resolution test chart featuring several groups of horizontal and vertical lines of varying thicknesses. Each group is accompanied by a numerical value indicating the resolution. The values include 1.0, 1.1, 1.25, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8, 3.2, 3.6, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.6, 6.3, 7.1, 8.0, 9.0, 10, 11.2, 12.5, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22.5, 25, 28, 32, 36, 40, 45, 50, 56, 63, 71, 80, 90, 100, 112, 125, 140, 160, 180, 200, 225, 250, 280, 320, 360, 400, 450, 500, 560, 630, 710, 800, 900, 1000, 1120, 1250, 1400, 1600, 1800, 2000, 2250, 2500, 2800, 3200, 3600, 4000, 4500, 5000, 5600, 6300, 7100, 8000, 9000, 10000, 11200, 12500, 14000, 16000, 18000, 20000, 22500, 25000, 28000, 32000, 36000, 40000, 45000, 50000, 56000, 63000, 71000, 80000, 90000, 100000, 112000, 125000, 140000, 160000, 180000, 200000, 225000, 250000, 280000, 320000, 360000, 400000, 450000, 500000, 560000, 630000, 710000, 800000, 900000, 1000000, 1120000, 1250000, 1400000, 1600000, 1800000, 2000000, 2250000, 2500000, 2800000, 3200000, 3600000, 4000000, 4500000, 5000000, 5600000, 6300000, 7100000, 8000000, 9000000, 10000000, 11200000, 12500000, 14000000, 16000000, 18000000, 20000000, 22500000, 25000000, 28000000, 32000000, 36000000, 40000000, 45000000, 50000000, 56000000, 63000000, 71000000, 80000000, 90000000, 100000000, 112000000, 125000000, 140000000, 160000000, 180000000, 200000000, 225000000, 250000000, 280000000, 320000000, 360000000, 400000000, 450000000, 500000000, 560000000, 630000000, 710000000, 800000000, 900000000, 1000000000, 1120000000, 1250000000, 1400000000, 1600000000, 1800000000, 2000000000, 2250000000, 2500000000, 2800000000, 3200000000, 3600000000, 4000000000, 4500000000, 5000000000, 5600000000, 6300000000, 7100000000, 8000000000, 9000000000, 10000000000, 11200000000, 12500000000, 14000000000, 16000000000, 18000000000, 20000000000, 22500000000, 25000000000, 28000000000, 32000000000, 36000000000, 40000000000, 45000000000, 50000000000, 56000000000, 63000000000, 71000000000, 80000000000, 90000000000, 100000000000, 112000000000, 125000000000, 140000000000, 160000000000, 180000000000, 200000000000, 225000000000, 250000000000, 280000000000, 320000000000, 360000000000, 400000000000, 450000000000, 500000000000, 560000000000, 630000000000, 710000000000, 800000000000, 900000000000, 1000000000000, 1120000000000, 1250000000000, 1400000000000, 1600000000000, 1800000000000, 2000000000000, 2250000000000, 2500000000000, 2800000000000, 3200000000000, 3600000000000, 4000000000000, 4500000000000, 5000000000000, 5600000000000, 6300000000000, 7100000000000, 8000000000000, 9000000000000, 10000000000000, 11200000000000, 12500000000000, 14000000000000, 16000000000000, 18000000000000, 20000000000000, 22500000000000, 25000000000000, 28000000000000, 32000000000000, 36000000000000, 40000000000000, 45000000000000, 50000000000000, 56000000000000, 63000000000000, 71000000000000, 80000000000000, 90000000000000, 100000000000000, 112000000000000, 125000000000000, 140000000000000, 160000000000000, 180000000000000, 200000000000000, 225000000000000, 250000000000000, 280000000000000, 320000000000000, 360000000000000, 400000000000000, 450000000000000, 500000000000000, 560000000000000, 630000000000000, 710000000000000, 800000000000000, 900000000000000, 1000000000000000, 1120000000000000, 1250000000000000, 1400000000000000, 1600000000000000, 1800000000000000, 2000000000000000, 2250000000000000, 2500000000000000, 2800000000000000, 3200000000000000, 3600000000000000, 4000000000000000, 4500000000000000, 5000000000000000, 5600000000000000, 6300000000000000, 7100000000000000, 8000000000000000, 9000000000000000, 10000000000000000, 11200000000000000, 12500000000000000, 14000000000000000, 16000000000000000, 18000000000000000, 20000000000000000, 22500000000000000, 25000000000000000, 28000000000000000, 32000000000000000, 36000000000000000, 40000000000000000, 45000000000000000, 50000000000000000, 56000000000000000, 63000000000000000, 71000000000000000, 80000000000000000, 90000000000000000, 100000000000000000, 112000000000000000, 125000000000000000, 140000000000000000, 160000000000000000, 180000000000000000, 200000000000000000, 225000000000000000, 250000000000000000, 280000000000000000, 320000000000000000, 360000000000000000, 400000000000000000,



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Mrs. Dalton did not permit him to finish the sentence. Laying her hand softly on his arm as he sat beside her, she looked earnestly into his face, saying, "Hush! Philip, do not complain or murmur. You know the Lord gave me all the years of my happy maidenhood, leaving no wish ungratified. I had health, wealth and kind friends, together with all that could render life pleasant. Then He has given me you, my dear and noble husband, and our dear and beautiful children. I have had all the happiness the world could shower upon my path; but when my Saviour pleaded for a place in my heart I repulsed Him, and gave it all to the world.

"The last evening I gave to the gay world I had serious misgivings about my own conduct, and wished I had remained at home. I had resolved to devote more of my time to home duties, but my Heavenly Father knew how closely the pleasures of life were entwined around my heart, so, in His mercy claimed me for the short remainder of my life. You cannot say I am unjustly treated. He has more than made up to me for all He has taken me from.

"I have a strange experience to relate and have never been quite able to decide whether it was a dream or a reality. I well remember everything connected with that last sad evening. The eloquence of the famous professor, in whose honor the brilliant assembly had met, failed to interest me. I was feverish and restless the whole time. I remember, too, the

terrible storm that was raging and the solemn silence that hung over us like a pall as we drove home. The chill I felt when, for the second time, I remembered the raging of the elements, but when the light of the hall lamp fell upon your face, Philip, and I saw the terrible agony depicted there, my heart seemed to stand still and I lost all control of myself. I have a confused recollection of seeing the doctor, then all became a blank, I know not for how long, but one day I seemed to be taking a journey all alone, it was a long journey, and I grew very weary, but I was compelled to go on, though very slowly. My limbs ached, my feet were sore and bleeding, and my head throbbed painfully. I tried to stop for a short time, but some unseen power impelled me onward. At length I gained the summit of a hill and stood for a moment to gasp for breath. I looked around to see if I had reached the end of my journey, when I saw straight before me, at no great distance, a building of such vast proportions and magnificence, that I knew at once that no human mind had ever planned it. Its many towers looked as if covered with glittering gems. Its windows were all ablaze with a glorious splendor. I stood and gazed with delight, saying, 'Surely this is where the weary rest, I must be almost home.'

"I began slowly to descend the hill, and now I saw what I had not noticed before, that the palace stood on an eminence, and to reach it I must cross the river that ran through the valley at my feet. As I

went on, the gloom deepened and I could distinctly hear the murmur of the waves as they beat on the shore. I soon stood beside the river and being anxious to cross, I looked around for some bridge, or some other means of crossing, but I saw none. As I stood shivering in the gloom, close to the brink, I heard a voice saying, 'If you wish to reach the other side, there is no other way but the river.' I cried out in agony, 'Oh! I shall be lost in the dark waters, for my strength is almost gone.' The voice replied, 'Take courage, what others have done, you can do.'

"I then stepped into the river and shuddered as it covered my feet. I went on and on, the waters still rising, till my head alone rose above the waves and my mouth began to fill with the foam that flew around me. I cried out for help. At last, making a desperate effort, I threw myself forward and grasped the bank. In a moment I found myself on dry land. A few steps brought me in full view of the palace.

"I stood and gazed with wonder and delight, at the wonderful spectacle that met my eyes. The palace stood in a vast inclosure, the walls were of solid granite, so strong and high no human foot could ever scale them. The entrance was guarded with a pair of massive gates, made of bars of beaten gold. The top of the gateway formed an arch composed entirely of precious stones, that represented all the colours of the rainbow. On the bottom bar of the arch were other characters, also composed of glittering gems. It was

a sight so surpassingly grand and beautiful, that I felt it was worth all the toil and pain I had endured to get one glimpse of it.

"I now became aware of a change taking place. As I drew near and stood before the gate-keeper, I noticed, with amazement, that I had on a robe similar to the one he wore. The robe was spotlessly white and fell around his form in graceful folds. His face shone with a heavenly radiance, but his eyes were the saddest I had ever seen.

"When I asked for admittance, he said, 'Have you the password?' I answered, 'No, but I have read the inscription on the golden bar, 'Rest for the Weary,' and as I am very weary, this must be my home.'

"He then answered, 'Read the characters in the rainbow arch and you will then understand what is required of all to gain admittance through the gates into the city.'

"I moved back a few steps and there read, 'The pure in heart shall see God, for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

"Looking earnestly at me he asked, 'Now, can you give it? It is a portion of what you have just read.' Not being able to tell him the proper words, I stood abashed before his searching gaze. At length, I ventured to ask 'Is it purity? See! my robe is as spotless as your own. You must not refuse me.'

"I moved towards the gate. Sweet strains of music

floated through the air, and I longed to enter and join the happy throng. But he stopped me, and speaking quickly, said, 'Draw up your robe, for the dust of earth is clinging to it.' I gathered it up in my hands, but found to my dismay that it was not spotless. His face was very sad and his words sounded like a death knell to all my hopes of rest. "Love not the world, nor the things of the world; for if anyone love the world the love of the Father is not in him." Go, return to your place on earth again. There is provided a fountain where you can cleanse your garments from this fatal stain, the love of the world. You will then understand the "password," "Washed in the blood of the Lamb."

"I could not reply, but pointed in terror to the river.

"He replied, 'You must return for a season and a purpose. Strength will be given for the journey, and when next you present yourself you will gain admittance, and likewise understand, "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what the eternal King of Heaven hath in store for them that fear him."' Sorrowfully I turned away and soon entered the 'river.' This time it barely covered my feet, and I was soon over. I quickly climbed the hill and turned for a last look at the delightful home I had lost for a season. Then I felt a change coming over me, and knew I was in human presence. Consciousness returning, I opened my eyes to find you and Daisy and the doctor bend-

ing over me. I remember it was some time before I could talk much. But I was earnestly seeking for that cleansing fountain. At length I realized that the blot—the love of the world—was gone from my robe, and I was ‘Washed in the blood of the Lamb.’”

Mrs. Dalton paused for a brief space of time, then continued, “With the knowledge that we are all in the way to that beautiful home I could suffer much more than I am suffering. And now, my precious husband and children, no word of regret must pass your lips, or shade of sorrow appear on your faces, for I am happy beyond what I could ever have conceived.”

A solemn silence fell on them all as she ceased speaking, and tears coursed each other down their cheeks, but tears of joy soon dry up.

Mr. Dalton asked, “Do you recollect speaking before that took place?”

She answered, “No, Philip; that was my first glimpse of the world to which I had returned.”

Mr. Dalton said, “It is a wonderful revelation, but I am inclined to think that the physicians would say, ‘It is a reality,’ for they both pronounced life extinct, but Daisy had gotten firm hold of the ‘promise,’ so we watched and waited while you took your solitary journey and returned to us again.”

“And now,” replied Mrs Dalton, “I am very weary. Get your harp, Daisy, and sing, ‘Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me.’ It applies to one and all, thanks be to God.”

So all was explained and understood, and as Daisy

retired to her own room, it was with a heart filled to overflowing as she thought of all that had taken place since that never-to-be-forgotten night, when in the dear old library, she had devoted her heart's service to the "King of Heaven."



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CHAPTER X.

ERNEST.

I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be a pleasant road,
I do not ask that Thou wouldn't take from me aught of its load,
I do not ask that flowers should always spring beneath my feet ;
I know too well the poison and the sting of things too sweet.
For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead, lead me aright,
Though strength should falter and the heart should bleed,
Through peace to light.

ERNEST now returned to Oxford, eager to fit himself for the Master's service. As soon as the regular routine of college life had commenced, the companions of the past were quickly re-united and the invitations given as usual to meet in a certain room. The young gentlemen who had before taken a kindly interest in Ernest asked if he intended to go.

Ernest replied, " By all means. I have something important to propose."

At the appointed time they all met and each one had much to relate that had transpired during their vacation, while one was spreading the table with all kinds of dainties brought from their distant homes. Meredith took a seat beside Ernest, and watched his

every motion. Cards were soon introduced, and the proprietor of the room then arose saying, they were met together to have a good time and every one was expected to give a short speech before commencing play.

When it came to Ernest's turn to speak, he arose and in firm, clear tones told of his altered views, his solemn promise to his father and sister never to touch wine or cards again; his consecration of his life to the service of the Lord Almighty, and his determination to carry it out to the end. He said he could join no more in their gatherings; but, would they not join him in his endeavour to do what was right in the sight of God?

They were too much astonished to answer, all but Meredith, who grasped his friend's hand warmly, saying, "I am with you, Ernest, heart and soul." Thus a life-long friendship was formed.

So pleasant was their companionship, so satisfactory their studies and so useful were their lives, that one after another joined them, till all of that band of young gentlemen had given up their wine and gambling.

Following the teachings and guidance of a faithful minister of the Gospel, they soon became co-labourers in the vineyard. Their leisure hours were spent in striving to benefit their fellow-creatures, and many of the villages and hamlets adjacent to the city were greatly blessed through their labours among them.

Mr. Dalton had once remarked "Poor mamma!

what can she do?" Daisy's reply came, "Such seed as she will sow will be sure to bear a rich harvest." The truth and wisdom of this remark was soon apparent. Mrs. Dalton had been famous, and her company much sought after, but never so much as now, while a helpless invalid.

She had her days for receiving visitors in limited numbers. Many went forth from that sick-room with new views and new aims, which were carried into effect in many homes, homes where life had hitherto been looked upon as one long holiday, in which to crowd as much of the pleasures of the world as possible, without a thought of the future. Now all was changed. Like a circle on the waters which widens more and more till it is lost in the wide ocean, so this heavenly influence diffused itself till eternity alone shall bring to light the rich harvest of precious souls that sprang from seeds sown in weakness but raised in power.

Daisy was soon joined by the younger members of these same families, eager to help in her labours of love among the poor and needy of the city; thus a band of young, earnest Christian workers was formed whose efforts proved a mighty power.

Ernest had now reached his twenty-first year, and had graduated with high honours. At his own request he was appointed to the charge of a very poor parish in the neighborhood of "St. Giles." His chief desire was that he might be useful to the poor and neglected of the metropolis of his native land.

He procured a modest lodging near the scene of his labours, where his friend Meredith joined him after the studies of the day were over. They proved very helpful to each other.

Ernest's salary was very small, but with it he knew he could carry help and comfort to many wretched homes; he had enough for his own use.

The two friends would often pay evening visits to some of the homes, so as to meet the husbands and fathers when the toils of the day were over. Sometimes they were able to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, but often returned home weary and sad-hearted from witnessing sorrows and sufferings for which they could offer no remedy.

For several months these two devoted friends worked on in harmony. Already the step of the young minister on the stairway, or at the door, was listened for with pleasure, and weary, aching heads would turn on their pillows, or dim eyes brighten, as he entered the chamber.

Ernest never made the mistake so often made by offering the Gospel to starving men and women, but, first, by making himself acquainted with their pressing needs and sympathizing with them in their troubles, he gained their confidence, then, when the hard and fallow ground was broken up, the good seed of the Kingdom was tenderly and plentifully sown. In the midst of his labours came an urgent request to come home at once.

He hurriedly scanned the contents of the letter, never once looking at the signature, or noticing that it was a strange hand-writing. He felt sure some change must have taken place in his beloved mother.

His preparations for the journey were soon made. Not knowing how long he might be absent, he left his flock in charge of a brother minister. After taking leave of his friend Meredith he was soon speeding on his journey homewards, little dreaming of the change there would be in his position on his return. One day! Ah, who can tell what events of vast importance lie hidden in the unfolded hours of a day! Thinking that it was his father who summoned him home, he expected to see him at the station. As he looked around and saw no one to meet him, he became very anxious and decided to walk home as quickly as possible. Just as he was about to leave the platform, he noticed a gentleman of a very pleasing countenance carrying a small travelling bag in his hand, who, apparently, expected some one. As his eye fell upon Ernest he started, and approaching him, made a most respectful bow, saying, "Excuse me, but are you from London?"

Ernest replied in the affirmative.

"And your name?" he asked.

"Dalton," answered Ernest, looking somewhat surprised.

The gentleman stood and appeared to be studying him for a few seconds, then holding out his hand, he

said, "I could not be mistaken, for you are the very counterpart of your honoured father when he was your age."

Ernest eagerly grasped the offered hand of the stranger, asking quickly, "Did you indeed know my dear father in his youth, and have you never met him since? He has aged very much during the past two years."

The lawyer just then thought, "Perhaps he has never made his family acquainted with his early history and I must be cautious," so he replied, "important business calling me to this city, I thought I would do myself the honour of waiting upon your father."

As they walked on together, Ernest asked his companion, of whose name he was still ignorant, if he had ever known his mother.

He replied he had not that pleasure, but had heard from his father of her serious illness, but hoped to find her recovered.

Ernest answered sadly, "Oh! no, sir, she can never recover. Indeed I fully expect that it is to her death-bed I am summoned home; but if it is so there will be no terror there, for she has long ago learned the 'password' to that beautiful city. You will not understand to what I allude, but we will explain it at some future time."

His companion answered, "I rejoice at what you say; that is of the first importance. But did I under-

stand you to say you were summoned home to her death-bed? It is possible you may be mistaken!"

Ernest shook his head, saying, "We shall soon know, for this is our destination."

The servant who opened the door uttered an exclamation, "Oh, Mr. Ernest!" which quickly brought Mr. Dalton from the library. He very cordially greeted his visitor, then turning to his son, he exclaimed, "But my dear son, this is a glad surprise! Daisy will be delighted."

"How is dear mother? Where is Daisy?" and "Did you not expect me?" were questions all eagerly asked.

Mr. Dalton replied, "Daisy is with your mother. We think there is some change, but you will soon judge for yourself, when you see her. I will now go and prepare them for your coming." Asking his guest to excuse him for a short time, he entered the sick-room.

When informed of her son's arrival, Mrs. Dalton did not manifest any surprise, but smiling she said, "It is all right. He has come just in time." Mr. Dalton was just leaving the room so did not notice her words.

He returned to the library and closing the door, walked over to where his guest was sitting. He again expressed his pleasure at meeting the son of his old and valued friend, and his own fellow-student, adding, "I can see the promise of your youth is

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richly fulfilled in riper years. And now let me ask if your business is entirely with me, or have you other business in the city?"

He answered promptly, "With you, sir; but allow me to ask one question—Is your family acquainted with your past history and change of name?"

Mr. Dalton answered, "My wife knows nothing of the past, and she is so near the end that my son and daughter agree with me, that it would be cruel to disturb her peace about any worldly matter. I have given them every particular of my history. For myself, my career has been remarkably successful, my married life very happy, and I am proud and thankful to be called father by two such children as mine."

Thus these two friends who had passed several years of their boyhood at the same school, and had met again in the "city of colleges" and who evinced a great preference for each other, now meet again after many years had rolled away, bringing many changes to both. They for a time seemed to forget the realities of later life in remembrance of the friendship of boyish days.

Clarence Wiseman had lived with his father and conducted the large and prosperous business carried on by "Wiseman & Son," for years before the death of that good and honourable man. The son followed in his footsteps and possessed the entire confidence of his many wealthy and noble patrons.

Mr. Dalton felt sure that the business was in some

way connected with Daisy's inheritance, and asked as a favour, if he would postpone all business till the following day, then they would be free to enjoy their first evening together.

Ernest now brought in his sister, and she was introduced to Mr. Wiseman. They now remembered, by his name, that he was their father's confidential friend.

Tea was now brought in, which proved very acceptable to the travellers. Daisy presided at the tea-table, and as Mr. Wiseman noticed her fresh blooming cheeks, and beautiful sparkling eyes, while happiness permeated her whole being, he thought, "Well may Philip Dalton be proud to call such a bright, lovely girl 'daughter.'"

As they sat, pleasantly chatting over tea, Mr. Dalton said, "You must pay a visit to our dear invalid. She is the happiest sufferer I ever heard of. Certainly I never saw one like her. As a Christian brother you will be welcome, and in leaving her presence will feel as though refreshed by the dews of Heaven."





CHAPTER XI.

REST FOR THE WEARY.

Methinks I see her in the final morn,
Resigned, submissive, patient and serene,
The grave had lost its dread ; death's sting its power,
And all was like a summer evening scene.
One hand she gave to Jesus, one to death ;
Then, looking upward to her Father's throne,
Her spirit vanished with her parting breath,
And fled to Eden's ever-blooming zone.

As Mr. Dalton ceased speaking, Carrie, Daisy's maid, appeared in the doorway and made a sign to Daisy, who instantly arose and followed her, but quickly returned and briefly stated "mamma wished to see them."

Mr. Dalton and Ernest at once entered the room and perceived that a great change had taken place in the last few moments. It was evident that the end was very near.

Mr. Dalton was at the side of his beloved wife in a moment. He spoke of his friend, Mr. Wiseman. She quietly answered, "Bring in your friend, Philip, then call up the servants ; I wish to speak to them all once

more." Her wish was instantly complied with, and Mr. Wiseman entered, followed by the servants. She was in an invalid's chair reclining among the pillows. The lawyer stood as if entranced as he saw the heavenly radiance of her countenance. She feebly held out her hand, so transparent, saying, "As a friend of my husband's and a Christian brother, you are doubly welcome."

Mr. Dalton was greatly agitated as he stood by her side and pressed her hand in silence. She then called each member of the household separately, giving to each one a parting token of regard and a motto by which to square their lives. Then, by her express wish, they all stood at a respectful distance to watch the end.

Looking lovingly at the dear ones who were vainly striving to restrain their tears, she said, "I shall not take my journey alone this time for my Guide has come for me. I see him now, as our dear old friend Judge Maxwell did, and he is all glittering in glorious apparel." She ceased speaking and the only sounds that broke the solemn silence of the chamber of death were the sobs that could not be repressed. Presently she opened her eyes, saying, very faintly, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life and I am now going to dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Oh, how kindly He has dealt with me, to suffer me to return to the earth to wash the stain—the love of the world—from my garments and

'make them pure and white in the blood of the Lamb.' He has given me strength to point others to that cleansing fountain. Yes, I shall meet many of my dear old friends where there will be more than mortal eloquence to charm the ear, more than fading splendors to gratify and delight the eye and senses. Philip, my best beloved, for all the forbearance shown me in the days of my folly, when the love of the world caused me to neglect the most sacred duties, may the richest blessing of my Lord rest upon you, filling your life with peace till we meet again. Ernest, my dear noble boy, be true to your name—earnest in the service of the King of kings. Daisy, my precious pearl, the favoured child of heaven, we owe it all to your decision." She closed her eyes and paused for a short space, then spoke again, "Yes, I see them coming from all nations, peoples and tongues, a vast multitude that no man can number, all gathered home. What songs of praise echo through the heavenly arches as they enter in through the gates of the celestial city. Keep true to your compact with your Lord. Yes, He has fulfilled every promise to me, and even now hath brought home my dear son to receive my dying blessing, and hath sent a friend to my dear husband just at the time he most needs one."

The husband, son and guest exchanged inquiring glances at each other, feeling there was something yet to be explained. But the dying Christian spoke again,

"Oh! cease your tears for me, for all is well, and I am almost home. One last kiss, my precious husband and children, then watch and see how tenderly He is bearing me over."

Awe-struck the witnesses of this solemn scene gazed while the fond caress was given and received. Mr. Dalton still retained her hand, while Daisy and Ernest stood on the other side of the chair. Her countenance was beaming with holy rapture. Once more she spoke, "I am in the river, but its waters are calm and peaceful, and there is no gloom; but light! all beautiful light, now I hear sounds of sweet melody, they are singing to greet me. The golden gates are open, and this time I shall be admitted to the 'Rest for the weary,' in the presence of my Saviour; for I am washed in the blood of the Lamb." Yes, the password was given, and she had entered into the celestial city whose builder and maker is God. No word was spoken, but all watched with amazement the heavenly light that played around and rested upon her features as they settled in the last long sleep.

No pen could describe the varied emotions that filled each heart, but truly they sorrowed not as those without hope, and the hallowing solemnity of that blessed death-bed scene could never be forgotten by those who were privileged to witness it.

The bereaved family now retired for the necessary offices to be performed to all that was left of the

beloved wife and mother. The tea they had so abruptly left, was still on the table. Daisy rang the bell, the maid entered, and amid sobs and tears cleared away the remains of the meal.

Mr. Wiseman was made acquainted with some parts of Mrs. Dalton's past history, which threw light on some words that had appeared strange to him. Grasping Mr Dalton's hand, he replied. "My dear sir, while I deeply sympathize with you at the loss of such a lovely partner, I would not have missed that solemn, soul-inspiring scene for some years of my life, and you realize what a perilous journey it is for an immortal soul through this world of snares and allurements, and to know how tenderly she was guarded, and how safely gathered home, where she is sheltered from all storms of time. This blessed knowledge must quickly prove a balm for every stricken heart, a cordial for every sorrow."

Mr. Dalton who well knew how great had been her peril, and how wonderful her escape, answered slowly, "Yes, my friend, oh! yes. God's will is best; I cannot regret that she is safe at home—at home with Jesus."

Daisy had not spoken since her last farewell to her mother, and was striving hard to restrain the tears that still lingered like drops of morning dew on the opening rose-leaves though the sun's bright rays had penetrated to its heart. She now speaks softly and reverently, "A mother in heaven, before

the throne, in company with angels, free from all pain and suffering, free from the temptations and allurements of the world. Safely over the foaming billows of life's tempestuous ocean, escaped the rocks and quicksands, and anchored safely in the haven of eternal rest and peace. Oh, blissful reality!"

Her tears streamed anew, but they were tears of genuine thankfulness that the end had been so widely different from what she once feared it might be. Turning to her father she said, "Dear papa, how tenderly our Lord is watching over us, and, as dear mamma remarked, has sent your friend in this trying hour to relieve you of all painful responsibility."

The two gentlemen were struck by her remark and Mr. Wiseman, rising, at once offered his services, saying he would gladly relieve his friend of every painful duty connected with Mrs. Dalton's funeral, and would postpone all business matters for a few days.

Mr. Dalton thankfully accepted the offer, remarking that he thought it was a wonderful providence that his son should arrive just in time to be present at his mother's death, and that his friend should come just when his presence was both a help and a comfort to them.

Ernest was about to reply, but a look from Mr. Wiseman checked his answer, and he remained silent. In a moment it now flashed across his memory that the letter he had so hastily read and thrown aside did not come from his father, which accounted for his

surprise at seeing him, and also explained his mother's words. What could it all mean? But he must wait for Mr. Wiseman to attend to the solemn duties he had undertaken; then he knew the lawyer would unfold the nature of his communication.

Mr. Wiseman had dropped no hint as to the cause of his visit. He had now been made acquainted with recent events, and comparing them with the past of Mr. Dalton's life, felt convinced that the hand of Omnipotence alone could have woven such a chain of wonderful events as those which had taken place within the past few weeks. In a few days Ernest would be of age, and then—but all business is laid aside for the present and we will wait and see—what then.

The funeral of Mrs. Dalton took place a few days later. The beautiful Violet was laid to rest beneath the sod, and her grave was thickly covered with the sweet modest flowers whose name she bore and while every returning spring they will bloom, fade and die, the soul that inhabited that lovely form, now sleeping so peacefully beneath, will bloom with immortal beauty in the Paradise above.

The evening after the funeral had taken place, Mr. Wiseman received letters of importance requesting his immediate return, so he expressed a wish to meet them all early in the morning to commence business.

At Ernest's request on the following morning Mr. Wiseman conducted morning service. Strengthened and refreshed both in body and mind they repaired at once to the library.



CHAPTER XII.

COURTNEY HALL.

How shocking must thy summons be, Oh, Death!
To him who is at ease in his possessions,
And, counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unfitted for the world to come.

MR. DALTON, his son and daughter seated themselves at the table with the lawyer at its head, who appeared quite nervous for a moment, but quickly recovered his composure, and addressing Mr. Dalton he said, "Permit me to ask you one question, sir, before proceeding further. Do you still intend to be known by the name of Dalton? Do not answer me till you have heard what I have to communicate. The letter Ernest received was from me, asking him to meet me here on important business. On meeting him at the station I soon discovered that there was some misunderstanding, and events have followed in such rapid succession that I thought it would be prudent not to refer to the matter in any way until I could disclose the whole."

Mr. Dalton answered calmly, but firmly, "My dear

air, whatever may be the nature of your communication it will not alter my determination. That question is settled for all time: I am Philip Dalton to the end. I have no objection to my son assuming his proper name should the necessity arise, or should he desire to do so."

The lawyer then arose and turning toward Ernest, said in a clear, firm voice, "Ernest Maxwell Courtney, allow me to congratulate you as the heir of the magnificent estate of Courtney Hall."

Mr. Dalton turned deadly pale, and in great agitation asked, "What of my brother?"

The lawyer answered, "You have no brother. Surely it is a fearful thing to defy the eternal God! But I will begin at the beginning, and fill in the missing links in this remarkable chain of family history."

Mr. Dalton had sunk back in his chair from which he had risen, and motioned the lawyer to proceed.

"You are already aware that a few weeks after your departure the squire brought home his bride, the Lady Eleanor Darlington, the beautiful daughter of a poor, but proud nobleman. Her beauty and accomplishments were all she possessed, but the squire was well content to take her without any other dowry, and was proud of his high-born and beautiful bride.

"For a time all went well at the Hall, which was a scene of great festivities; for the Lady Eleanor had many relatives and acquaintances who were well pleased to pay long visits to Courtney Hall.

"In the course of two years a son and heir was born which was an occasion of great rejoicing, but in less than two years more he died in convulsions. The parents' grief was very great, but the father was almost frantic, calling in question the justice of God in the most dreadful language.

"After some time had elapsed a daughter was born, which was a great disappointment to the squire, and as years rolled away, and another daughter, and then another, were added to the family, his rage knew no bounds. For a long time he was barely civil to the mother, and took no notice whatever of his three interesting young daughters; but plunged into all sorts of dissipation.

"The unhappy neglected wife, feeling that she could not hide her sorrow at the unnatural conduct of her husband and keep secret the estrangement between them from visitors, declined to receive any company. So the guests who frequented the Hall were, like himself, gentlemen given to the unrestrained gratification of the worst passions, gambling, drinking and profanity.

"Lady Courtney had her own private apartments, where, with her children and their governess, she spent the whole of her time, not even seeing the squire for weeks together, but endeavouring to assist in the education of her children, to whom she was tenderly attached.

"Thus years passed away. One day a letter came

to the squire, announcing the arrival in England of Lady Courtney's brother. He had won distinction in India, but his health being somewhat impaired, had come home to recuperate, and intended to pay a long visit to Courtney Hall.

"Here was a dilemma, for the squire well knew that if his neglect and unkindness to his wife became known, he would have to face the just indignation of the noble soldier, who would resent at once such conduct towards his sister, and he did not wish to forfeit the good opinion of one so distinguished.

"He obtained an interview with his wife, asking forgiveness for his cruel treatment, and entreating her to take her proper place again, and all due respect should be shown her.

"Lady Courtney had never uttered any complaint through all the sorrowful years through which she had passed. She would rather have died than that any of her family should be made acquainted with her sad experience. So for her brother's sake she consented to her husband's request.

"The condition of affairs at the Hall had been the leading topic of the day, so Lady Courtney was warmly greeted by the throngs of visitors who soon filled the Hall. Many looked the sympathy which they dare not express. Many happy reunions took place, between the uniform kindness of her husband, and the tender and affectionate regard of her noble brother. The roses so long faded, bloomed afresh on

Lady Courtney's cheeks, and the black clouds of despair and misery were rolled away for a season.

"The young ladies had never been in company, so lonely and solitary had been their lives; but they were now brought forward by their uncle who took a great interest in them. For the first time in all their lives, they dare approach their father without dread.

"Thus months rolled away. The squire had put a curb upon his evil habits, not even inviting his dissolute companions to the Hall. The summer and autumn had flown swiftly past, and winter approached. Colonel Darlington bade farewell to Courtney Hall, well pleased that his favourite sister was the mistress of such a splendid domain.

"The squire continued to act a kind husband and father, and in a few months Lady Courtney gave birth to a son. The joy of the father to know that there was an heir to Courtney Hall was beyond all description. There was general rejoicing in the country. He was most lavish in his attentions to his wife, as if anxious to make amends for past injuries. But verily, 'what a man sows that shall he also reap,' yea, even to a hundredfold. The reign of terror under which Lady Courtney had so long lived, had seriously deranged her nervous system, and now came the bitter reaping.

"The child had now reached the age most interesting to parents, especially to mothers, when the sweet infantile prattle is the sweetest music to her ears.

Lady Courtney had long feared that all was not right with the little one, but dared not mention such a thing for fear of the squire's wrath, which she well knew she would have to bear. The dark clouds began to lower in the distance, and the time came when the terrible truth could no longer be hidden. There was no sweet baby prattle, no dimpling smiles of intelligence, but in place of those, strange incoherent and unintelligible sounds came from his lips, while his large blue eyes were filled with a look of horror, as if some frightful object was constantly before them.

"When the squire became aware of this appalling fact, he at once summoned the most clever medical men in the kingdom and waited in a state of terrible suspense for their opinion. The blow fell at last with such violence that the squire was beside himself with rage and mortification, to know that his own cruel neglect and base treatment of his wife for so many years, and the constant dread of seeing him and of meeting with abuse had wrought such sad havoc on her whole system. He was informed that the young heir was mentally as well as physically deficient, and would always remain so.

"I will pass quickly over the painful scenes that followed. There was not even the semblance of civility shown to Lady Courtney by her husband, but the most cruel insults were cast at her if by chance they met.

"The squire now plunged deeper and deeper into all

kinds of extravagance. He played and lost heavily, and while one side of the Hall was a scene of deepest dejection, where the mother and daughters wept many tears of anguish and sorrow, the other part resounded with songs of drunken revelry. So tyrannical had he become, and so bitter his hatred, that they dared not ask for funds sufficient to replenish their very scanty wardrobe.

"I have often called upon them,—in fact my friend Mr. Artwell, the faithful steward of the Courtney estate, and myself were all the friends the poor lady possessed. Her parents were dead, her noble brother far away. The sister who always envied her her brilliant marriage, she could not make known her misery to her.

"So years passed away, and she seldom ventured to enjoy a walk in those beautiful grounds for fear of meeting the unnatural husband and father. But one day when they believed him to have gone a distance to meet the hounds, they all ventured out intending to spend the day in some lovely shady spot, some distance from the Hall. The maid carried a basket of luncheon, and the governess followed with poor little Francis, whose large eyes looked all around in terror, as if expecting some hideous object to appear before him. On coming to a sudden turn in one of the winding paths they came face to face with the squire. He was giving instructions to some woodmen about cutting down a fine clump of trees. His funds ran

low and they must be replenished. He well knew that the steward would not approve of this proceeding, so had engaged the men himself to cut down and draw away the trees. When he saw the group that stood spell-bound at his appearance, he forgot the strangers standing by and his own position as a gentleman, and poured forth a volley of bitter imprecations; asking the lady how she dared to make an exhibition of that drivelling, muttering, idiot? Saying that if she did not take him at once to her own room, and never expose him in public again, he would have him shut up in some asylum. Then taunted her in the most cruel manner about her clever high-born child.

"At the sound of the father's voice the poor child had tried to hide himself in the folds of his mother's dress. The governess attempted to raise him in her arms, but he was seized with strong convulsions, and in that state the sorrowful group retraced their steps.

"The squire had taken no notice, but mounted his horse, which a groom was holding at a short distance, and rode away for a day of pleasure and excitement, to be followed by a night of revelry.

"I was walking up to the Hall to see if I could be of any service to the ladies. As he rode away in one direction I chanced to come from the opposite one. I found the men eagerly discussing the matter among themselves. They were men with wives and children at home and were thoroughly disgusted with the

quire's conduct. They did not care to proceed any further in the transaction, and this just suited my purpose, for Mr. Artwell and myself had determined to prevent, as far as possible, the despoiling of the property, so the noble trees were spared this time.

"After a few words more with the men, who readily promised to have no more to do with the squire, I continued my walk and in a short time came suddenly upon the group of terror-stricken ladies. The poor child had fallen on the grass. His struggles had become so violent that they could carry him no farther. I took the little fellow in my arms and carried him to the nursery and laid him on his bed. I can never forget the look of horror in his eyes as he fixed them on his broken-hearted mother and weeping sisters, and then looked around for some other object, but, not seeing it, the horrified look gave place to one of confidence and peace. He tried to speak but failed, then quickly pushing his little hand into that of his mother's, he opened his eyes and looked at her, and in a moment was beyond the reach of cruelty and suffering. The heir of Courtney Hall was dead. He had been his mother's and sisters' sole companion for a few years, and they had learned to love the poor, little, speechless creature. They would miss him very much, but yet were thankful to know that the despised victim of unrestrained passions was at rest forever. I at once supplied the ladies with the necessary funds for mourning. I felt this was but their just right and

was determined to brave the squire's anger, if he were displeased.

"The poor little heir was laid to rest in the family vault with all due honour paid him.

"The squire had sunken so low in the estimation of the people that none but the most dissipated and reckless cared to visit him. But he was still a guest at the gambling table in more than one country mansion, where, under the influence of wine and excitement, he often lost large sums of money. He had begun to raise money on whatever was not strictly entailed, and was determined to sweep all before him.

"One morning I was walking over to the steward's,—for it now took much of our time to plan schemes by which to thwart the squire in his works of destruction. We met face to face at the lodge gate. The groom was holding his horse. The hounds were out, and the day was to close with a grand banquet at a nobleman's seat a few miles distant.

"I asked him when he would be at liberty, as I had some business of importance that I wished to call his attention to.

"He replied, 'I suppose you wish to tell me that the exchequer is empty, and that I am ruining the estate. I do not know if there is any living heir to Courtney Hall, neither do I care, but if there is, it is little he shall find to enjoy. I will have every tree cut down and every flower plucked up, and if I chose to pull the house down, it concerns no one but myself.'

"I ventured to say, 'Your daughters, sir, with proper portions may marry well.'

"He stopped me in a great fury, saying 'I have left them to their mother, to dower them like unto herself, with high birth and accomplishments.'

"I pleaded for the unfortunate lady, but he would not listen to a word, but turning fiercely to me, asked, 'Do you know anything of Philip? I believe by your looks that you do.'

"'And what if I do?' I replied somewhat sternly, for my heart burned within me as I looked on his once handsome countenance, now bloated and disfigured with the marks of dissipation.

"He answered, 'I want to know, that is all.'

"I replied, 'I am happy to say that I do know. Mr. Philip is living and has won his way to honour and distinction. He married a very beautiful, accomplished and wealthy lady. He has two children, his son having just left college, with high honours, and now engaged in a noble public work. His daughter is as good and fair as a fresh May morning.' I could not help adding, 'So you see God did not forsake him, although his brother denied him a home.'

"He answered, 'You have been in correspondence with him! Tell me about him.'

"'There is not much more to tell, only when he left the home of his father, he also left the family name behind, and vowed never to touch a penny belonging to the Courtney estates as long as he lived, but his

noble son is undisputed heir. Would it not be well to make peace with your injured brother?' I added.

"He turned upon me a look of withering scorn. 'Oh! yes, and have him triumph over me, a disappointed man! No doubt he would say that he is avenged, and that the hand of Providence is in all this. I own I cannot prevent Philip's son from inheriting the estates, what he will find of them, but if you are striving to secure them for him, I will so destroy and lay waste that he shall find nothing but the soil, except "the hand of Providence," as you call it, interferes to prevent it;' and with a bitter oath on his lips he rode away.

"That same night, drunken with wine and mad with excitement, he mounted his horse. Although his host urged him to stay for the night, he laughed him to scorn, and galloped away.

"The groom endeavoured to overtake him, but in vain. When he was about a mile from the Hall, his horse shied at something. He could not see in the darkness what it was, so dismounted from his horse and procuring a light found to his horror that it was the dead body of the squire which lay across his path. It was evident that he had galloped madly down the hill, fallen forward off his horse and broken his neck. The affrighted horse passed right over his prostrate body, and rushed wildly to the stables. The groom of the stables saw at once that something was wrong, and calling for assistance, started in search of the squire,

"The groom in attendance was about to remount when he saw lights coming from the Hall, so awaited their arrival.

"The body of the squire was conveyed home, and Artwell and myself were quickly on the spot.

"I communicated the terrible tidings to Lady Courtney and her daughters, and though they were horrified at his dreadful end, I did not wonder that no tears of sorrow dimmed their eyes.

"My next business was to make her acquainted with your history. She was very much affected and tears filled her eyes, as she said, 'What mercy or consideration can we expect from one who has been so shamefully treated?'

"I assured her she had nothing to fear from you or your son, who was now the undisputed heir, but on the contrary, had everything to hope, telling her at the same time of your vow never to enter the Hall again.

"I knew the painful circumstances of your brother's death would be a great shock to you, and might possibly reach the ears of your invalid wife, so Lady Courtney and myself thought it would be wiser not to communicate the tidings, but wait till the funeral was over and then come in person, and give you all details, and also take back the heir to take formal possession.

"In less than a month after the death of the child, the squire was laid beside his lost heirs. Very little

respect was paid to his memory, for his conduct had been so outrageous, and the facts were generally known.

"I then wrote to Mr. Ernest to meet me here; little thinking of what would take place. Now, my dear sir, do you approve of the course I have taken?"

Mr. Dalton paused a short time to control his feelings, then replied, "You have not only my entire approval, but my grateful thanks." Then warmly grasping the lawyer's hand he said, "Believe me, I would rather have taken his hand in friendship and brotherly love, than that my son should inherit his vast estates. I did not wish for revenge, but verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

The lawyer answered, "Indeed, my dear sir, the events of the last month prove very plainly what folly and wickedness it is for mortal man to defy his Maker, and scoff at Omnipotence!"

"Forgive me for this last time alluding to the past. As you may remember, I had not left Oxford when you bade farewell to Courtney Hall. Some time after my return home, my father gave me a share in his business, and also took me into his confidence. He told me he had met with you, and that you had found kind friends, but said nothing at that time of your change of name. He also told me that he had appealed to the squire in your behalf, beseeching him to do you justice. But he replied, 'Oh! Philip will get along all right; you know he is cleverer than I.'

Besides, he added, 'you know I am going to marry a high-born lady and her rank must be kept up.'

"He never mentioned your name to him again, though we often spoke of you and took notes of passing events. On my father's death-bed he told me by what name you were called, and putting into my hands your correspondence, he added, 'Guard well the property, my son, for God will some day avenge the wrong which has been done.' The day of the squire's funeral I heard your name spoken of by a few spectators, and I am sure, for your own sake, your children will be gladly welcomed.

"Mr. Artwell and myself prevented much damage to the estate, both feeling that we were saving it for a better landlord. The terrible end did not take me by surprise, for I felt that morning that his cup of wickedness was full to the brim. Now, sir, I have finished. What are your plans? for I must return home to-morrow."

Mr. Dalton replied, "My own plans are formed. Ernest must decide for himself. I know he is capable of doing so. For myself, I can say I feel no resentment against the unhappy Lady Courtney. She must have suffered very severely. My son will now tell us what his plans are, and may he be guided aright."



CHAPTER XIII

ERNEST'S PLANS.

"He is true to God, who's true to man."—*Lowell.*

ERNEST had been preoccupied during the last few minutes, but now addressed the lawyer. "Can you give me some idea what the revenues of the estate are to which I have so unexpectedly fallen heir?"

Mr. Wiseman produced a packet of papers from his valise and handed them to Ernest, who quickly looked over them, then handed them back, saying, "That is sufficient for the present; we will go into details at some future time. My honoured father and dear sister, I do not feel like giving up my labours now, for they are so encouraging, but this is what I purpose doing. Daisy and I will put ourselves under Mr. Wiseman's guidance and go to Courtney Hall and take formal possession. I will then install Lady Courtney as mistress in my absence. A sum of money shall be paid, sufficient to keep up the establishment, not in lavish expenditure, but in plenty and comfort. As there are debts to pay, lost property to retrieve, with economy it can be done. The first year I purpose using the Hall for a house of

rest and peace for the weary and tired workers in the world's great harvest-field. I shall make frequent visits so as to become acquainted with my people and their wants; and some day in the future I may make it my home. Have you anything to suggest?"

His father looked at him with admiration. "No, my son, I cannot suggest any improvement to this first proposition. I can only say, go, and may the Lord God of Heaven and earth go with you and bless you, and may you walk before Him in purity and truth all the days of your life, and may the ancestral halls which He has given into your keeping become a training ground for Him."

It was then arranged that Mr. Dalton should go on to London and occupy Ernest's lodgings till the brother and sister returned from the Hall.

Before separating to prepare for their journey, the father, son and daughter knelt together in the old library that had become so dear to each of them. A short, earnest petition arose for direct guidance, and as they arose from their knees Daisy threw her arms around each of the dear ones standing before her, saying, "Oh! dear papa and brother, I am so glad to know we made friends with the Lord Jesus, for He can be very terrible to those that resist Him. Uncle Francis built his house upon the sands of time, and how sad and complete the ruin of body and soul. How I long to go and offer some crumbs of comfort to those ill-used and unhappy ladies."

Her father looked earnestly at her. She understood the look and, kissing him fondly, said, "I shall not be absent very long, and I know you will not be comfortless or alone."

Mr. Dalton answered, "My dear child, you do not realize what you are to me, but I will not be selfish, for I know full well that from the day you enter Courtney Hall, the dark clouds of sorrow that have so long hung over it will fly away, just as the rising sun disperses the mist of a summer morning."

The next morning the travellers commenced their journey. Mr. Dalton and his personal attendant accompanied them to London, and Daisy was attended by her faithful maid, Carrie.

They stopped once for refreshments, and, taking the evening train, reached the station of Courthampton early the following morning. It was a bright, sunny, September morning. The steward had been apprized of their coming and was in readiness to receive them. They entered the stately carriage which was drawn by a splendid pair of black horses. The men-servants, in their mourning liveries, were all attention to the new squire and his beautiful sister.

They were soon speeding along between hawthorn hedges, whose spring wealth of fragrant blossoms had given place to the fruits of autumn. Here the large, bright, scarlet berries of the wild dog-rose, and the dark red fruit of the hawthorn presented a beautiful contrast to the dark green leaves and sharp thorns

intermingled with bunches of the prickly holly. Here many wild creepers grew and threw broadcast their vines of different kinds and colours, as if to decorate the parent hedge for giving nourishment and protection to their fragile tendrils through the heat of summer. Here and there were seen large masses of maiden-hair, or more frequently called honesty, clinging firmly to it, covering portions of its thorny sides with its large, shining, silken clusters, as if to protect it from the wintry blast that would soon sweep fiercely through it. The birds sang low, soft melodies to each other as they hopped among the branches, as if conscious that their pleasant sunny days would soon be at an end.

Ernest and Daisy had become deeply interested in the varying scenery. As they reached the top of the hill they got a glimpse of the mansion but it was soon lost sight of again. It was on this hill that their father had stood and taken his last look at the home of his fathers as he went out alone into the wide world, and here too their unhappy uncle, who had alike defied God and man, had ridden to destruction. At the bottom of the hill they were shown the spot where his dead body lay. The porter's lodge was soon reached and in a short time they drew up at the grand entrance, and, under the escort of Mr. Wiseman and the steward, the heir and his sister crossed the threshold of Courtney Hall. They took no notice of the lofty halls or their splendid adornments, the groups

of servants looking with curious eyes, but were both anxious to lift the burden of care and sorrow from the hearts of their new-found relatives.

Though weary and hungry after their night of travel, the lawyer led them at once to the library where the ladies were waiting in fear and trembling to know their doom. Absolutely homeless, friendless and penniless, their health and spirits broken by long years of neglect and cruelty, their mourning robes contrasted painfully with the deathly pallor of their woe-begone countenances. It was a sight to demand sympathy from the hardest heart.

The brother and sister stood for a moment shocked beyond measure at this pitiful sight. Ernest turned upon Mr. Wiseman a look of entreaty, who at once conducted them to the sorrowful group and formally introduced them to each other.

Ernest strove to speak but the words died upon his tongue, while tears of the most genuine sympathy filled his eyes; but Daisy at once threw her arms around her aunt's neck and laying her own soft blooming cheek close to the pale and suffering one, she said, "Dear Lady Courtney, we have never met before, but do not look upon us as strangers and intruders, but find a place in your heart for us, for we have just lost our own precious mother." Daisy's tears now fell fast, and mingled with those of Lady Courtney whose misery was somewhat softened, but who could not utter a word. Then Daisy turned to

her cousins and kissed them affectionately, saying, "I am sure I shall love you all very much. I hope soon to see you all looking bright and happy, for though sorrows may endure for the night yet joy cometh in the morning."

Ernest, who seemed to have forgotten himself, had been silently watching Daisy, but now started as Lady Courtney spoke, "I have but one favor to ask of you both. I beseech you to lay aside my empty title. It has brought me nothing but bitterness and sorrow, and now I am at your mercy; do not mock me with it. My life has been a cruel disappointment and a sad failure. Were it not for my daughters I could wish the end of all things had come for me, for my heart is broken and there can never be anything but misery for me. But they are young. If you could ever forget the insults offered to your father on my account, and allow us a home in one of the lodges and a very small sum, merely enough for our maintenance. We shall not want company, but try to hide ourselves from the world; and rest assured we would never intrude ourselves upon you. This is all I crave at your hands." She closed her eyes as she ceased speaking, and a low moan of anguish broke from her bloodless lips.

Ernest had listened patiently, and he now stood before her and taking her thin wasted hand in his own he raised it reverently to his lips, saying, "My dear aunt, part of your request shall be complied with,

for you shall always be very dear to us, but all due respect must be shown you and our cousins. The last part we will dispense with, for I have a favour to ask of you. I do not intend to make my home at the Hall for some years, but I want it kept in proper order, ready for me at any time; therefore I want you to act as sole mistress in my absence. You will have perfect liberty of action. Mr. Wiseman will pay you a certain amount of money, sufficient to keep up this establishment. You will understand there are certain debts to pay and improvements to be made. I also wish to economize so that I may be able to give a marriage portion to each of our cousins. Nay! hear me out. I have reason to believe that Mr. Artwell will be faithful to your interest as he will be to mine. It will be advisable for him and his good wife to occupy apartments in the Hall. His presence will be a protection for you and our cousins. Our mutual friend, Mr. Wiseman, will have the management of all money matters. I shall send you some guests," but seeing a look of alarm on Lady Courtney's face he hastened to say, "Do not think that I will suffer any person to come to intrude upon your privacy or cause you any annoyance whatever. No, your guests will be weary workers in the service of our common Lord and Master, in whose vineyard I am myself engaged as a labourer; so you will, I know, entertain and look well to their comfort for my sake, as well as the sake of the Master whose servant I now am. Dear Aunt

Eleanor, will you do all this for me that I may be able to return in a few days and take up my duties, being well satisfied that you will prove a faithful regent in my absence?"

Lady Courtney attempted to rise to her feet but trembled so violently that Ernest assisted her, and Daisy too was soon at her side. Throwing her arms around them she asked, "Can it be a reality? You cannot be flesh and blood. No, you must be two of those pure sinless beings that are sometimes permitted to visit this world so full of sorrow and suffering. Oh, surely this must be a delightful dream from which I fear to awake."

Ernest replied, "It is no dream, but I trust you will find it a pleasant reality. I am waiting for your answer, for we are both so entirely human as to be in great need of some breakfast. We have travelled all night, and before attending to our bodily wants were quite anxious to put your mind at rest."

Her answer was a close clasping of her arms around them both and a fond kiss, while she shed tears of thankfulness, saying, "If you are human, you are indeed angels of mercy to us."



CHAPTER XIV.

ERNEST AND DAISY.

Just on the borders of the wood,
A pretty rustic cottage stood ;
Around the window woodbine twined,
Clematis o'er the porch it twined,
So shaded from the summer heat
The cottage was a sweet retreat.

ERNEST now offered his arm to Lady Courtney and led her into the breakfast-room, where the steward had ordered breakfast to be served. They lingered over the meal for some time discussing their plans. After a short rest Daisy expressed a wish to walk in the grounds, and visit the gardener's cottage. Lady Courtney excused herself and retired to her own room to think over the great change that had come that day into her hitherto wretched life, so the cousins started for their walk without any fear of a painful termination.

They soon arrived at the cottage. It was indeed a lovely spot. Many autumn flowers were still blooming and the later roses were still in rich and fragrant clusters. They found the gardener, David Golden, a

pleasant and intelligent young man about thirty-two years of age. With the greatest respect and in a most pleasing manner, he invited the party to enter his pretty cottage. His wife had gone to the village to visit a sick friend and he regretted very much her not meeting with the new squire and the young ladies. There were three fine rosy-cheeked children assisting their father in his work.

Daisy was delighted with everything in and around the cottage, remarking, as her father had done, many years before, "Surely care and sorrow can find no resting-place in this lovely spot."

Ernest inquired if he had known the old gardener, Thomas Dawson, saying, he had heard his father speak of him with affectionate regard and as being one of his truest friends when a lad.

The strong man's eyes filled as he answered, "To that dear old friend I owe my present happiness." Then Ernest desired him to tell them everything about him.

The gardener answered "First permit me, sir, to offer some light refreshment," and before Ernest could protest, the bright round table was covered with a snowy cloth and several kinds of tempting fruit were placed in nice order upon it as if by magic. A pitcher of sparkling water from a bubbling spring close to the cottage with some brightly polished glasses were added, and the repast was complete.

The young man bowed respectfully saying, "While

you do me the honour to refresh yourselves in my cottage, I will tell you my story. I was an orphan, my parents having died when I was quite young. An uncle, a well-to-do farmer, took me to live with him. He had but few children. Never a day of my life passed but he told me I was a nuisance and a burden to him. I worked very hard, and honestly tried to please, but it was all in vain. My heart became hard and full of bitter thoughts. One night I lay pondering upon my unhappy condition and felt all at once that I was old enough to do for myself; anyway, things could not be worse with me than they were. Next day I managed to hide a piece of bread from my supper. I had no difficulty in getting away for I slept in the hay-loft, and what few clothes I possessed were hanging on the wall. That same night about an hour after the family had retired I made my few things into a bundle and went forth into a beautiful starlight night my own master for a time. I had done no wrong, so had nothing to fear from anybody. Never having been any distance from the farm, I knew not what direction to take, but I travelled on all night taking whichever road I came to. In the morning I sat down beside a brook to rest and to eat my piece of bread. My object was to get as far away as possible, so I travelled on all day till foot-sore and weary I came in sight of these gates. Just as the sun was sinking over yonder hill, my strength failed me and I sat down. Presently the gate opened and the old gardener came out wheeling a

barrow. He noticed me and looking kindly at me said, 'Tired, my lad! Have you walked far?'

"I could not tell him how far, but in a very short time told him my story. He looked at me saying, 'If I give you food and shelter for the night, will it bring me trouble? Are you sure you have wronged no one?'

"By this time I was quite overcome with weariness and hunger. I could not help the tears filling my eyes, but before I could answer him, he said, 'Well! come along, my lad, you are in need of rest and food and you shall have it anyway.'

"As I followed him through the gate into this pretty cottage, I felt as if I had reached Heaven. I had never known kindness before and now how tenderly the dear old man waited on me. He gave me a good supper, bathed my swollen feet and laid a nice bed for me on the couch.

For several days I could scarcely stand on my feet, so bruised and tender had they become. But as I lay on the grass and watched him at work and noticed how often he raised his eyes upward asking for guidance, I felt it concerned myself and thought how sorry I would be to leave my dear old friend and this quiet spot. Just as these thoughts were running through my mind he came to me and said, 'David, my lad, will you stay with me without wages for a while till I make you useful? You will be company for me, for I am getting very old.'

"Oh! how thankfully I accepted this kind offer, and I determined to do the best I could for him. He then asked permission for me to remain and it was granted. Oh! how happy were the years that followed. The good old man taught me to work and to weed, but better than all this, to love the Master he so faithfully served, the Lord Jesus. After a few years I was able to undertake the most of the work myself. He was very feeble, but could still walk around and see that all was properly done.

"He would often say, as we sat at supper, after the duties of the day were over, 'David, my lad, I am glad the Lord sent thee footsore and weary to me, long ago, or I should have been very lonely all this time, and now there is one to care for me and close my eyes in their last long sleep and fill my place when I am gone.'

"Our lives were very peaceful and contented, and then an event took place which proved of great importance to us both.

"A distant relative of Mr. Dawson's, an orphan, came to the Hall as maid. As she was very pretty and well behaved she was soon annoyed by the attentions of a young groom, to whom she very much objected. One evening she came to the cottage, as she very often did, and said she must leave the Hall for she could no longer bear the persecutions she had daily to contend with.

"My kind old friend looked strangely at her saying, 'Come and sit by me, Polly, while I talk to you.'

Then turning to me with a meaning look in his eyes he said, 'David, don't you think it is quite time we got a housekeeper to manage things nicely for us? I am too old to do much now, and Polly is all I have beside yourself.'

"I saw his meaning in a moment and it suited me well. Although I had never spoken a word of love to her, it had been much in my thoughts of late. We soon had it settled, much to my joy and my old friend's. I saw her safely back to the Hall, and, after consulting the steward, she left the Hall in a few days and stayed with Mrs. Wiseman while the 'banns of marriage' were published in the church.

"The gay young groom was furious over his disappointment and conducted himself so badly that the steward soon discharged him.

"It was a bright and blessed day for us all when I brought her home as my wife, and indeed, she has been the light of the home ever since. She was so kind and tender to the dear old friend—our more than father. When our first child was born he was delighted and wished him to be called 'Dawson.' He could scarcely bear him out of his sight. When the boy could just run around and call 'grandpa,' another child was given us, but he took very little notice of anything except his little favourite.

"The dear old man constructed a comfortable seat for himself, where he could recline and rest under the shadow of those huge rose trees. There he would be

for hours with the little one playing beside him. One day I had been to the other side of the grounds pruning the rose trees, and had brought a large basket full of the fragrant blossoms, intending to take them to the Hall after tea. Leaving the basket inside the door, I walked around the house, making myself busy. After a while the meal was ready but grandpa and Dawson were not there. I found them in the old favourite spot; but what a sight met my eyes! The dear old saint was reclining in his seat, his head resting on a large, soft cushion which Polly had made for him, and the child had covered him from head to foot with roses and then sat quietly watching him. As soon as the child saw me he spoke softly, as if fearing to awaken him, 'Papa, grandpa gone to sleep and I have covered him with roses.' Yes, the child had taken the basket of roses and had strewn them upon the peaceful sleeper who did not awake again, for he had gone to his heavenly rest.

"We missed him very sorely, and the poor child was quite inconsolable. He would run around calling in piteous tones, 'Grandpa! Grandpa! Where are you? Dawson wants you.' But Dawson understands where grandpa is now." These words were addressed to a bright lad of about ten years of age, who now entered.

He gave a pleasant nod in answer to his father's query, then presented each of the visitors with a beautiful bouquet which he had been arranging for them.

The father's eye sparkled with pleasure as they expressed their admiration of the perfect taste the lad had shown in his selection. As the party arose to take their leave, they each felt that the time had been profitably as well as pleasantly spent, Daisy remarking that she would repeat his story to her father, for he had told them that the last words of the good old gardener to him were, "Keep right on in the path of duty, Master Philip, and, like your old friend and servant, you may chance to die among the roses." "I pray it may be as beautifully verified in papa's case as it has been in his."

Another hour was spent very pleasantly sauntering from one scene of attraction to another, inhaling the sweet odour of the remaining flowers, which the gentle September breeze wafted o'er them.

When the party met in the banquetting hall, Mr. Wiseman was there by special request. But could that be Lady Courtney that Ernest led in and placed at the head of the table! The kindness and generosity of her young relatives, the knowledge that she was now perfectly free to enjoy the beauties by which she was surrounded, and that her daughters were not looked upon as intruders; to know and feel that all this was a delightful reality, dispelled the dark clouds of despair. Although her eyes were moist, there was a look in them of perfect trust.

The next day the tenants were assembled in front of the mansion. The new squire stood on the terrace,

his sister and cousins on one side, and on the other was his aunt, Lady Courtney, lovingly leaning on his arm and supported by Mr. Wiseman and the steward. Ernest briefly related his reasons for calling them together. He detected a strong inclination to cheer him, but he gently repressed it, saying, "My friends, I cannot allow any rejoicings at present; we have all experienced great sorrow. It is but a few days ago since our beloved and beautiful mother left us for a fairer clime, her eternal home, where we all hope to meet again. I trust that you are all striving to reach that better country. It is a strange chain of events that has brought me here on this, my twenty-first birthday, to take possession of this beautiful estate of which I had never heard until very recently. I shall not make my home among you at present, for I am engaged in a work of far greater importance than Courtney Hall with all its grandeur. These two worthy gentlemen—turning towards the lawyer and steward—will still look after our mutual interests. I shall come occasionally and spend a few days, and some time in future I may permit you to give me a welcome home. In the meantime, my much esteemed aunt, Lady Courtney, will be the mistress of the Hall. Even a shadow of disrespect shown to her or our cousins will be followed by instant dismissal. In your sorrow or sickness, come to her; she has known both, and will sympathize with you. I intend to make some changes which I trust will be satisfactory."

On learning that the squire was not a fox hunter, but would sell the horses and hounds, the greatest satisfaction beamed on the countenances of several burly farmers and they whispered among themselves, "There will be no more damaged crops or complaints paid back in cursing."

Ernest then stepped down among them, speaking words of encouragement and shaking hands with them, and kindly dismissed them. Every tongue was loud in his praise, and though they were restrained while at the Hall, as they grouped together discussing matters on the village green, one jolly old farmer, whose broad face was all aglow with smiles, took off his hat, saying, "We must give one cheer for the handsome young squire who respected the rights and property of his tenants." In a moment every hat and many bonnets were off and whirling through the air. Such a rousing cheer echoed through the village as had never been heard in Courthampton.

The steward and his wife settled in their apartments almost immediately. The late squire's attendants were dismissed. The village vicarage was visited by Ernest, and such earnest loving words addressed to the vicar, as a fellow-laborer in the vineyard, that the next Sunday the congregation was astonished at the earnest, pleading entreaty to all, to begin a new life. Their visit is now drawing to a close. All arrangements have been completed. The roses are beginning to bloom on hitherto pale cheeks; eyes often dim and

swollen, now shine, with a happy light. Yes, a sun-beam has penetrated those sad hearts and dispelled the gloom.

Daisy had spent a few hours alone with her aunt and cousins, and had told, in gentle loving words, that she had given her life entirely to the Lord Jesus; how blessed and triumphant had been the last hours of her beloved mother, and how Ernest was now working for the Master. Then she continued in her sweet simple manner, "He has been such a tender loving parent to His adopted child, that I would have those I love accept Him too. Dear aunt, will you take service with my Master? Then you will have a friend both able and willing to bless, even when earthly friends are powerless to help you, 'For He is faithful that promised.' It has been very recently proved that 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.'"

Daisy ceased speaking, but her tender wistful glances, together with the tears that shone in her eyes, all carried conviction to their softened hearts, and sinking on their knees with low and broken petitions they offered the residue of their lives to Daisy's Lord and Master.

Ernest had requested the steward to perform the duties of chaplain. He gladly promised to hold daily worship, so henceforth the very rooms which had been the scenes of drunken revelry would now echo with songs of praise and thanksgiving.

The parting hour came at last. There were many tears shed, but it was like an April morning, sunshine and rain intermingled. In the meantime, Carrie, Daisy's maid, had not been idle. She had told of the never to be forgotten death-bed scene, and of Miss Daisy's life, and what the young squire was doing among the poor in London, until they all earnestly desired to live a better life. The new order of things at the Hall was heartily welcomed.

When the travellers were well on their journey, Daisy related what had passed between her aunt, cousins and herself, remarking, "How applicable are those beautiful words, 'The people who sat in darkness had seen a great light.'"

Ernest, looking lovingly at her replied, "Yes, verily; for the day-spring from on high hath visited them."

They found their father anxiously awaiting their return and looking very dejected, but immediately brightened at their entrance. Everything was soon explained to Mr. Dalton, who expressed his entire approval of all they had done at Courtney Hall. He soon changed the subject by remarking to Ernest, "Mr. Meredith is a fine fellow. I am thankful to know you have such a true friend."

The next day was spent in making all necessary arrangements for the extended tour which Mr. Dalton and Daisy were about to take. They would not return for over two years, but when Daisy became of age she must return to take possession of her fortune.

The following day they left London and said farewell to the beloved son and brother, but the knowledge that their Master reigned supreme over all the ends of the earth soon made them feel satisfied. Before leaving, once again the father and daughter stood together in the dear old library. The memory of the precious hours spent there was very sweet, but the dear invalid needed their prayers no more. No, she was safe at home. But oh, how they missed her!

A short time sufficed to settle all business affairs. Mr. Dalton's successor took possession of the house around which so many tender memories clung, and now Mr. Dalton and Daisy had bidden farewell to the shores of their native land.





CHAPTER XV.

HAPPINESS.

Never a sigh of passion, or of pity;
Never a wail for weakness, or for wrong
Has not its archive in the angel's city,
Finds not its echo in the endless song.

It would be impossible as well as unnecessary to try to follow Mr. Dalton and Daisy in their wanderings through distant lands, but from Daisy's letters we get frequent glimpses.

Mr. Dalton never recovered from the terrible shock he had received; all energy was gone, and he did not wish to take any part in Daisy's many schemes for doing good. When she would ask for his opinion or approval, he would invariably reply, "Follow out your own ideas, my darling; it will be sure to be right."

She attended personally to all his wants with the most devoted affection. He seemed to live but in her presence. But Daisy suffered no day to pass away unimproved.

In some places that suited Mr. Dalton they lingered for several weeks. In those places Daisy would soon

draw around her a circle of attentive listeners, and her simple loving words often fell like oil on the troubled waters of many a weary heart that had found the pleasures of the world all unsatisfactory. Sometimes she would be the centre of a group of merry children who had stopped their play to listen to the sweet words of the old, old story as it fell from her lips. Sometimes she was found by the sick-bed, reading words of comfort to some lonely sufferer and supplying their temporal wants at the same time. Surely she sowed beside all waters. There we will leave them and return to Ernest.

It was but a few days after his return to London that his friend, Dr. Meredith, came in one evening to tell him that he had found a fit subject for the new asylum he had opened at Courtney Hall. He had been called in too late to prescribe for a lady who was dying. It was the oft-repeated story of recklessness and ruin. The father had previously died but the mother lingered on for months, the gay world, where her life had been spent, forgetting her very existence. The daughter, who was brought up in luxury, was now left alone in the world. She had been a tender and affectionate nurse to her sick mother, and was almost distracted at her loss.

Ernest's keenest sympathy was at once aroused, and he urged the doctor to accompany him without delay. They found the young lady very despondent, for with her mother all her hopes had died, and she was

altogether unable to brave the storms of life. Ernest perceived at a glance that they had come just in time.

He very quietly drew from her as much of her history as was necessary for the carrying out of his plans. He found her well educated but extremely sensitive. So with the greatest caution he approached the subject, asking her if she would accept the position as companion to some young ladies, his cousins. He feared their education had been somewhat neglected, and it would prove of mutual benefit to all parties. He told her that the doctor, his friend, would attend to what was necessary for the interment of her mother, and would then conduct her to Courtney Hall, where he trusted she would soon regain her health and happiness.

Ernest, with thoughtful kindness, did not offer her a home of charity, but proposed to pay her a salary, part of which he would pay her then. The young lady could find no words to express her gratitude for such timely assistance.

The preparations were soon completed, and Dr. Meredith was her escort to the Hall. The cousins took kindly to the orphan, and amid the peace and plenty of the beautiful home and sweet companionship of kindred spirits, she soon recovered her lost strength and spirits. She remained for some years the esteemed and faithful friend and companion of the ladies of Courtney Hall, until she left to become the light and mistress of another home.

Ernest found plenty of proper subjects for his benevolent project. Some who had toiled through the heat of the day, realizing that their strength had departed, and energy was lost; others who had battled bravely with poverty and sickness till the last spark of hope had vanished. To many such as these a sojourn of a few weeks or months, as the case required, surrounded by all the comforts that kindness could suggest, restored the shattered health and cheered the drooping spirits. Yes, many left their burdens of care and sorrow behind them and returned to the world, with its business and its duties, with strength renewed like the eagles. And how many prayers arose to the Father in Heaven from the grateful hearts of those whom he had rescued from the iron grasp of sorrow, sickness and despair, for choicest blessings to descend on the head of the generous young squire.

Dr. Meredith had taken charge of several of the worst cases, and had stayed for a few days each time to look after their welfare. He always returned to his London home in high spirits, and deeply interested in those who attended to them with such affectionate solicitude. He told Ernest that Lady Courtney and her daughters were nobly filling their places, that he esteemed them highly, but was it fancy, or did Ernest hear one name more frequently on the young doctor's lips! He thought how well pleased he should be if his suspicions proved correct.

There is now one other person we must introduce to your notice, that of a noble young missionary, who, like Samuel of old, had been dedicated to God at his birth. His parents had both passed away while he was very young. At the age of twenty-one he had finished his education, and at once volunteered to go to Africa. He first spent one year in preparation for the all important, and at that time perilous, undertaking.

Having spent ten years labouring faithfully and successfully, he returned to England broken down in health, and, as he believed, to die. Possessed of talents of the highest order, a fine well-knit form and handsome features, which bore the stamp of spiritual nobility together with an unbounded store of energy, he had refused to give up his work as long as he was able to stand. But the day came at last when all unable to stand, he had been carried on board the boat that brought him back to the shores of his native country.

In a very emaciated condition he had reached London. When the physician who was called in to take charge of his case, brought with him the young pastor of a neighbouring parish, and introduced them to each other, there was a cordial grasp of the hand followed by a few minutes conversation. There opened out before the eyes of the toil-worn and weary worker, who had not counted his life dear unto him for his Master's sake, a vista of green pastures beside pleasant and health-giving waters.

He gratefully acknowledged the hand of his Lord and Master in thus providing for him a home.

The next day, accompanied by his kind host and his friend Dr. Meredith, they commenced their journey to Courtney Hall, for this was the home provided for him.

Ernest saw him comfortably settled in his apartments; and commending him to the especial attention of his aunt and cousins, passed one night at the Hall, and next morning took his departure, telling them that he would leave his friend, the doctor, to take care of them, smiling, as he remarked he believed it was as beneficial to the doctor as to the patients. He noticed that a rosy blush dyed the cheeks of one of his cousins. No, he could not be mistaken; his suspicions must be correct.

For a while Dr. Meredith's time was fully occupied, for his patient was very much exhausted, and he grew somewhat anxious on his account, but after a few days of perfect rest and careful nursing he began to rally a little. At the end of a week the doctor was perfectly satisfied to leave him, feeling hopeful that he would, in time, regain his lost health and vigour.

After Dr. Meredith's return to London, the first evening Ernest and he spent together, they had much in common to speak about. After various matters had been discussed and the last patient's case spoken of, the doctor still lingered. After a few moments silence he wheeled his chair around and faced his

friend, saying, "Ernest, my dear fellow, I am in a strange mood to-night. I have been thinking very much during the last week and I am impressed with the great difference in our positions in life. When I think of the vast machinery you have put in motion and how beautifully it works without the least friction, to know you have both the means and the desire to continue this magnificent spiritual enterprise and to ponder upon its grand results, I am lost in wonder. I confess I feel like a very insignificant person myself."

Ernest looked curiously at him and a smile played around the corners of his mouth as he replied, "Are you not going a long journey to reach what is close at hand? Shall I tell you, my friend, of what you are thinking? Your modesty and humility will not suffer you to speak your thoughts. You are saying in your heart at this moment, 'Yes, I feel I enjoy his confidence and true friendship, and I believe he esteems me highly, but will he care for a closer connection? In fact, will he care to become my cousin?'"

Dr Meredith sprang to his feet, exclaiming, "How exactly you have read my thoughts! But do tell me, am I asking too much? You know I am not a rich man, and may never become so in the eyes of the world; you are her natural guardian and you know me better than anyone else does. Do you think it presumption, or have I your permission to offer her my hand and name? She has long been in possession of my heart."

Ernest warmly grasped his hand, saying, "You have my full and free consent, my dear Meredith, and I will see that Clara Courtney is not a portionless bride. I have watched with great satisfaction the progress of this love affair, and have no doubt but you understand each other perfectly."

The young doctor's eyes sparkled with delight as he returned the pressure of his friend's hand, saying, "Yes, I think we understand each other, but without your consent I should never have spoken and would have discontinued my visits to Courtney Hall, but your ready complaisance with this dearest wish of my life binds me closer to you forever. Command me when and where you will ; you have placed me under a life-long obligation."

Ernest replied, "Do not pain me by talking of obligations or ever again referring to any difference in position. Can I ever forget your disinterested friendship just at the most critical moment of my life ? How nobly you stood by me and strengthened and helped me in my first attempt to speak for the Master. Are we not sworn brothers in the service of the eternal God ? If He has given into my keeping more of this world's wealth, is not my responsibility greater than yours ? My great desire is to prove a faithful steward in all respects to my Lord and Master."

As the friends were about to part for the night, the doctor remarked, "I think it would be well to go

down to the Hall during the next week. I am somewhat anxious to have my fate decided beyond a doubt and to look after the welfare of Seymour Ashfield. He is a noble fellow. To give such an one back to the world is, in truth, conferring a blessing upon humanity."

Ernest replied, "Go, my friend, and my best wishes attend you."

The doctor took the first opportunity to visit Courtney Hall. He found the missionary, Seymour Ashfield, still very weak but looking very happy as he reclined upon a couch.

The ground outside was covered with garments of spotless white, and though the keen north wind whistled around the mansion, the fire burned brightly within, and all was peace.

Miss Courtney was reading to the invalid in low soft tones, and the doctor thought he was in a fair way to recovery.

He lost no time in asking the happy, blushing Clara if she loved him well enough to leave her splendid home and become the mistress of one of much smaller dimensions, at no very distant date. And Clara Courtney answered, "Yes, if I reign supreme in its master's heart."

Gathering her to his bosom and imprinting a kiss of betrothal upon her rosy lips, he replied, "Ah! my sweet Clara, you have long reigned there."

The engagement was now made known, and was

received by the mother and sisters with the most sincere pleasure; for they looked upon the young Christian doctor, next to Ernest, as being the noblest of men.

The winter passed happily and swiftly away, and with the return of spring newly-awakened blossoms burst forth in fresh beauty, and the melody of happy song-birds rang through the groves, laden with rich perfumes. Yes, with the awakening of all nature, Seymour Ashfield awoke to the blessed consciousness that health and vigour had returned to him, the colour to his cheeks, the ease and grace to his movements; that, in fact, he had been restored from the very jaws of death back to the world that needed him so much.

He had however made one discovery which caused him much serious thought. The sweet society of the past months, the affectionate and tender care that had been lavished upon him, the hours of hallowed intercourse he had enjoyed with kindred spirits, all made him feel that to bid adieu to the loved inmates of the Hall and its noble owner, and go forth again a lonely wayfarer at the call of duty would prove a severe trial; but there must be no drawing back. He smiled as he told himself, "Be of good courage and all will be well."

Miss Courtney had been his most constant companion, and had heard from him many incidents of his travels and labours. Her keenest sympathy

was awakened, and she often remarked, how noble it must be to spend one's life in the public vineyard of the Lord. Were she a man she would prefer this life to any other, (over half a century ago there were not so many ladies engaged in public). So Miss Courtney had often silenced the promptings of her heart, when listening to the thrilling descriptions given by Seymour Ashfield, to wish she too could share in this glorious work.

Her own life had been so wonderfully transformed through the Christianity of two persons, that she felt a longing desire to offer to others the same balm that had healed the sorrows of her own heart, and those dear to her.

One day after making that same remark, Mr. Ashfield said with a look of the deepest interest, "Miss Courtney, do you not believe that woman's work is as acceptable to the Master as man's?"

She answered, "I cannot understand how it can be. Will you explain?"

He replied, "Let me draw you a picture of a missionary in a foreign land without any human being he can call friend, without a home, but having different stopping-places, where his pressing wants will receive attention. He goes forth in the morning to his duties, he sows beside all waters, he bears fatigue, maybe hunger and thirst. He meets with persecutions, disappointment, discouragement, and such trials as you cannot perceive. He returns from his

travels, weary in body and often distressed in spirit." Seymour Ashfield paused a moment, then went on to say, "If that missionary is so fortunate as to be blessed with a wife, all this is changed. He receives a tender welcome home, a warm clasp of the hand, the easy chair is put for him, while cool refreshing water is placed before him to bathe his burning brow. His simple meal is prepared, and as it is partaken of he is listened to with kindly interest as he gives the details of the labours and journeys of the day. Think you he does not forget his weariness and his disappointment in such a haven of rest and peace as this? Oh! yes, he can say, like one of old, 'A good wife is from the Lord.' Then see what influence a woman has over her own sex. Why! it often proves of more importance than the more public labour of the husband."

He ceased speaking, and looked earnestly at her while he waited for her answer.

It came slowly, "Yes, I see that is indeed a noble work, but so few can engage in it."

Mr. Ashfield continued, while his voice grew somewhat husky, "I shall shortly return to my far away field of labour; for I love the service of the Master to whom my life is consecrated. He has given me back my physical powers, and they must be spent for Him. This place has indeed proved a paradise of rest. May the richest blessings the Master has in store be poured in abundance upon the noble-hearted gentle-

man who has opened his magnificent home for such grand and glorious purposes. Though I take with me a host of happy memories, yet these will be mingled with fond regrets."

She looked at him with glistening eyes as she said, "Mr. Ashfield, did you ever know a human heart without one regret?"

He did not answer her question, but stood in profound thought, then turning suddenly to her he asked, "Miss Courtney, do you love the Master well enough to endure hardships and privations for His sake?"

She met his gaze firmly, saying, "If you can show me how I can be more useful to my fellow-creatures, and more acceptable to the Lord Jesus, then I will willingly make any sacrifice for His sake."

They had both risen to their feet and stood looking earnestly at each other. Seymour spoke again. "I have had some very narrow escapes, and have stood more than once face to face with death, but never did my heart throb so wildly as at this moment, while my reason and inclination are battling for the mastery. It is dear Miss Courtney who has become more precious to me than aught on earth except my Master's service. I yet shrink from asking such a sacrifice at your hands."

She made no reply, and taking both her hands in his he pressed his lips upon them, saying, "Forgive me, Miss Courtney, if I am asking too much."

She did not withdraw her hand but softly asked, "Seymour, do you mean you would like me to figure in that picture which you drew for me a short time ago? Oh! do not speak any more of my beautiful home. I care not for splendour, for it fades and dies. But if I could make the far away home a haven of rest and comfort for God's faithful servant, I ask no higher, nobler destiny."

A happy light broke over his countenance as he clasped her in his arms and pressed her closely to his throbbing heart, as he said, "My dearest Catharine, you have indeed made me the happiest of men, but it will be a new and trying experience for you."

She replied, smiling, "I have no fears for the future. Surely I can bear hardships as well as another."

"But, Catharine, will your mother consent to give you up?"

As soon as the second engagement was made known, and met with no opposition, (for Lady Courtney rejoiced in the prospective happiness of her beloved daughter) Mr. Ashfield went at once to London to consult Ernest, and to report at headquarters that he would soon be ready to return to his distant field of labour.

His perfect recovery was looked upon as miraculous, and he was warmly congratulated.

He decided to return in June, which just gave them one month for preparation.



CHAPTER XVI.

REJOICING AT COURTNEY HALL.

"From Burmah's shore, from Africa's strand, from India's burning plain,
From Europe, from Columbia's land, we hope to meet again."

ERNEST was not taken by surprise by Mr. Ashfield's confession, for Dr. Meredith had prepared him in a measure. But he looked very grave as he took the extended hand of the missionary, saying, "I hope you look upon this as a very serious matter. I certainly do myself. I trust she is as suitable in all respects as in age, being but a few years your junior. I know but very little of Catharine's spiritual capabilities. I hope most sincerely she is a proper person to become the wife of a missionary."

Mr. Ashfield replied, "Mr. Courtney, words fail to express what I owe to your generous sympathy. Among the many rich blessings which I have enjoyed at Courtney Hall, believe me, I prize more highly than all else, the pleasure of Miss Courtney's acquaintance. The many happy hours spent in her society, the untiring kindness bestowed upon me, a helpless

stranger, together with the interest she has taken in my past labours. All this, makes me perfectly satisfied that she is well fitted to become a missionary's wife; and she is the only lady I could ever ask to fill that position."

Ernest replied, "So far, that is satisfactory. Now, for business; for I have pledged myself to find a marriage portion for my cousins. The time has been short in which to raise a large sum of ready money, but I will run down to the Hall and make the necessary arrangements. The double marriage had better take place at the same time, as my sister will be home, and I would like to give the tenants a general holiday.

Seymour Ashfield took possession of Ernest's lodgings, and was left in charge of his work while he went to the Hall.

Ernest was delighted to witness how much two years of happiness had transformed those ladies. Their cheeks were blooming with health, their eyes sparkling with joy and happiness. After a few minutes conversation with his cousin Catharine, his last scruple had completely vanished. He next sought an interview with Mr. Wiseman, and found the sum he required could be readily supplied. So on the following Sunday the double banns of marriage were published in the parish church of Courthampton; a circumstance which was highly gratifying to the good old vicar.

There was great rejoicing in the village and among all the tenantry when it became known that the squire's sister, that bright and beautiful young lady who had spoken kindly to them, would be present at the wedding and they were going to have the holiday that had been promised. The steward had given them permission, and they would now let the young Squire see how much they esteemed him, and also give a welcome to his sister.

So, in joyful preparation for this great and happy event the month of May passed quickly away.

Mr. Dalton and Daisy were expected home at the end of May, but did not reach England till the beginning of June. Mr. Dalton firmly refused all entreaties to become the guest of Mr. Wiseman. He felt it would only revive painful memories, so he decided to spend a few days at his old home, where he would be a most welcome and honoured guest.

Daisy and her faithful Carrie took the express for London, where she found her brother and Mr. Wiseman waiting to receive her. The brother and sister were soon clasped in each others arms, while tears of the truest affection sparkled in their eyes. Ernest eagerly inquired for his father, and Daisy told him she had ceased to urge him to come to Courthampton, for he had told her that he could never revisit those places again, that old wounds would bleed afresh.

"So, my dear brother, let us put the subject aside and enjoy the brief space of time allotted me,"

Daisy was surprised to hear of the double marriage so soon to take place. The door of an adjoining room opened, and the two gentlemen entered who were so soon to claim cousinship with her. They had heard very much of Daisy, so the greeting was very cordial. She expressed a wish to spend as much time as possible with the cousins from whom she was so soon to be separated.

They engaged a special train, which brought them several hours earlier to Courthampton.

The following day was Daisy's birthday, which was also the day fixed for the double wedding.

The possibility of an earlier train had been suggested by the steward, and the carriage had been sent to the station. The place presented a lively scene. The platform and waiting-room were gayly decorated, and flags were flying in all directions. Men and women were standing in groups chatting merrily and looking forward to the morrow. When the train was heard in the distance the excitement grew intense. As the party stepped to the platform they were greeted with a ringing cheer.

Daisy gave a few minutes to the eager villagers who crowded around asking after their welfare. Then Mr. Wiseman, who suffered no one to forestall him, handed her into the carriage. The rest of the party followed and were driven rapidly away, amid the shouts of joy and exclamations of "The Lord bless her bonny face!" "Sure she is as beautiful as an angel!"

and, "Aye! aye! neighbour, you are right there!" The decorations were continued the whole length of the road from the station to the Hall.

The church was beautifully dressed with flowers and evergreens. Every one seemed to anxious to take an active part in the general rejoicing. A magnificent arch of evergreens spanned the lodge gates, and as the carriage approached there could be distinguished the words, "A Welcome to Daisy," composed of brilliant blossoms intermingled with the dark green branches. It was beautiful to behold. Other eyes as well as Daisy's filled with delight as they gazed upon it. The first greeting over and Daisy clasped her arms around her aunt's neck, exclaiming, "Oh! auntie dear, I am sure you have found Him all I told you, for you all look just as His children should—very happy."

Kissing her fondly, Lady Courtney replied, "Yes, my darling, we have indeed found Him all you told us, and the blessed light of love you left behind has never grown dim."

When the party met at dinner Daisy told the gentlemen she was going to claim the last privilege she was ever likely to get—the company of her cousins for the rest of the evening, saying she had much to relate and much to hear.

As she looked out of the window by which she was standing, she noticed several men busily engaged putting up long tables beneath the trees for the next day's feast. She remarked to the two gentlemen still

lingering near, "Do not spend your last evening of single blessedness in idleness, but go and help those men who have been working all day."

They went out and, being joined by Ernest, the trio offered their services in preparing for the next day's rejoicing. They were good-humoredly accepted, so all worked together till the last ray of light had fled. As the men walked home they talked of the great difference between the late squire and the present one. One of the number, a great rough fellow who had lately come to the village to live with a widowed mother, using her none too kindly, remarked, "Well! mates, if that is what Christianity as you call it will do for folks—will make the young squire and them swells, his chums, come and work alongside of the likes of me and talk so nice and pleasant like all the time, why I think I will try what it will do for me."

He kept his word, and from that time he became an altered character and a comfort to his aged parent.

When the circumstance was made known to Ernest some months afterward he exclaimed, "Oh! Daisy, there is another jewel for your crown."

The fourth of June rose bright and fair. Daisy and Ernest had risen very early and had met the family lawyer by appointment. Daisy was given full possession of the fortune left her by her deceased grandmother. The faithful trustee, Mr. Wiseman, had attended well to her interest so that the amount far exceeded her most sanguine expectations, and she

found herself to be a wealthy heiress. Not for her own sake did she rejoice, but for the good she could do for others. Ernest saw her eyes brighten and he felt convinced some new project was forming in her mind.

She soon made known her intention to provide for the missionary cousins. To Ernest's refusal she replied, "It is the Lord's share and must be devoted to His service, besides Catharine could not bear the privations of a missionary's wife. This sum will enable them to live in comfort for some years, and then further provision can be made if necessary. I will leave Clara and Dr. Meredith to your tender mercies. It gives me great pleasure to see the blessed and useful future which lie before the both of them. They have been chosen by two noble Christian men."

Ernest and Daisy now walked into the breakfast room with glad hearts and good appetites. After the meal was over the servants were assembled as usual for family worship. A short service followed, and those voices that would never again mingle together arose to heaven in one united and earnest supplication for the blessing of the Lord of heaven and earth to follow and abide with every one whithersoever their varied duties might call them. Then they separated to prepare for the wedding.

All was excitement and bustle. The grooms were busy tying bunches of flowers to the horses' head-gear.

There were several guests staying at the Hall and

others had just arrived, and with them a large company of the tenants. Their numbers continued to increase till the last carriage had passed through the gates, then, falling in line on each side, they formed a guard of honour to the church.

Concerning the fair brides and their apparel, a few words will describe them on this beautiful June day.

No long train of fluttering bridesmaids, but Rose, the young sister, and Daisy attended them, while Ernest and Mr. Wiseman gave away the brides, who were arrayed in simple garments of spotless white, their fair, white brows bound with chaplets of roses. The bridal veils of soft and shining texture, fell in graceful folds over their well rounded shoulders, but could not hide the radiant happiness that beamed in their eyes.

With happy smiles they received the warm congratulations of their many friends, and as the bridal party left the church a hearty cheer for the lovely brides and handsome bridegrooms rang through the air.

The whole village was going to the Hall, with the exception of some invalids who could not walk, but Daisy was prepared for this, and, wishing all to take part in the pleasures of this glad day, asked the coachman to drive back down the street. Softly and tenderly those helpless ones were lifted into her carriage and settled comfortably among the cushions,

which brought another hearty cheer from the villagers. They all filed in marching order and escorted the party back to the Hall.

While everybody is busy and happy preparing for dinner we will look for a moment into the inner circle.

Assembled in the library we find Ernest and Daisy, Mr. and Mrs. Ashfield, Dr. and Mrs. Meredith, Lady Courtney and Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Wiseman, the steward and his amiable wife and the good old vicar, all tried and true friends of the family.

The family register of the Courtneys of many generations was brought in and opened by the squire and properly signed by all present. As Ernest closed the book and handed it back to the steward he said, "I never before so fully realized the value of wealth as I do this day. I earnestly desire to prove a faithful steward over what God has given me, or rather lent me. I wish to obey the divine injunction, 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.'" Stepping to Mrs. Meredith he placed a cheque in her hand, saying, "Accept this, dear Clara, as a wedding present. In the hands of your noble husband it means not only prosperity for yourself, but comfort and relief to many suffering sons and daughters of humanity." Then grasping the doctor's hand, he said, with a voice quivering with emotion, "My dear Meredith, my first and truest friend, may the God whom you so faithfully acknowledged in the old

college days at Oxford, bless your going out and coming in."

Ernest turned away to hide his emotions and Daisy stood in his place, saying, "I too, wish to serve the Lord with the first fruits of my inheritance. How can I do so better than providing for His faithful servants while they carry the word of life among the people. My dear cousin, I heartily approve of the course you are pursuing. You have my warmest sympathy." As she spoke she pressed a cheque into Catharine's hand, saying, "This will secure you from many inconveniences, and through you I trust it may prove a blessing to many of the dusky sons and daughters of Africa."

Daisy followed her brother from the room. The cheques were examined and proved to be for ten thousand pounds sterling. They were then handed back to the lawyer for safe keeping.

Lady Courtney here remarked, "It is a great privilege to know Daisy. The first drops of balm that ever fell into my sore and sorrowful heart came from her dear lips."

The lawyer answered, "Yes, she is a most unselfish young lady, rejoicing only for the sake of others that she is the possessor of wealth. Truly they are a noble pair."

The tables now are heavily laden with excellent food. The young ladies and gentlemen assisted in waiting upon the vast assembly, the invalids being

tenderly cared for. When every want had been supplied the squire and all his party sat down to lunch in the open air beneath a group of noble trees. They were waited upon in turn by the happy villagers, after which they dispersed and took part in the various kinds of amusements which were provided for their entertainment.

It was a day of perfect enjoyment without one drawback. The guest, whose baneful presence destroys the peace of private families as well as public assemblies, was not permitted to show his hideous visage among the happy crowd at Courtney Hall.

As the shades of evening began to fall, a plentiful tea was served, and partaken of by the whole company, who declared with one voice, there had never been *such* a day since Courthampton had been in existence.

The time was drawing near when they must separate, and Dr. Meredith and Seymour Ashfield both gave a short address which was received with great applause, but when the young squire stood forth and thanked them all for the pleasure he and his friends had experienced in their enjoyment, and he proposed in the future to throw open to the public the beautiful grounds of Courtney Hall one day each week, a deafening cheer rent the air from hundreds of joyful voices and grateful hearts.

Daisy now brought forth her harp, and as her skillful fingers swept the strings, many bright eyes filled

with happy tears, then, with heads uncovered, they sang that grand old hymn, "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne," then Seymour Ashfield prayed for God's blessing to rest upon all assembled there, till they met before the great white throne. Many there registered a solemn vow to be on the right side at that final gathering. So the long, bright happy day came at last to its close.

The brides retired to prepare for travelling. Mr. and Mrs. Ashfield purposed spending a few days with Dr. and Mrs. Meredith, then would sail for their distant home.

Lady Courtney was very much affected as she clasped her eldest daughter to her heart, feeling that she might never again see her in this life, but she had the assurance that in the "Sweet Bye-and-Bye" they would all be gathered home into the heavenly fold.

The carriages are now waiting, and the last farewells are said. Ernest and Daisy accompany them, also the villagers in a body escort them to the station. One more ringing cheer as they take their seats, and the train is soon lost sight of.

Ernest and Daisy returned to the Hall for a few days, the delighted tenantry to their homes, to thank God again for a God-fearing instead of a fox-hunting squire.



CHAPTER XVII.

FAREWELLS.

A FEW days later brother and sister were present at the embarkation where Mr. and Mrs. Ashfield found some very valuable additions to their luggage. Two trusty servants from the Hall had become very much attached to Miss Courtney, and now pleaded hard to be allowed to attend her to her new home. The young people were engaged to be married and were a God-fearing couple, so the squire readily consented. Indeed it was a most satisfactory arrangement.

On the dock they were joined by a brother missionary and his wife. The little party embarked, the anchor weighed and the shores of old England were soon lost to view.

Ernest returned to the Hall to spend a few more days with his beloved sister from whom he must so soon part for an indefinite period. On returning one day from a walk in the grounds with his sister and cousin, Ernest found a stranger awaiting him, about his own age, indeed so strong was the resemblance between them that he might be taken for a near relative.

He had a strikingly handsome countenance, and a fine manly form. He introduced himself as "Sir Philip Dalton." Ernest started as he pronounced the name so familiar to him. He informed Ernest that he had just fallen heir to the estate of Darley Manor. It was heavily encumbered, for the last two baronets had been very reckless, almost ruining the property. Though he was not in the direct line he believed he could claim kinship with him, as a grand-aunt had married a Squire Courtney. This lady was Ernest's grandmother, the beautiful Rose Dalton, who at her death had left Daisy sole heiress of her wealth. Sir Philip continued, that he had heard much of the young squire of Courtney Hall and desired his friendship.

He begged Ernest to advise him in the choice of an overseer and a couple of trusty servants. He thought he could then rapidly economize and restore the Manor to its former beauty and value.

Ernest at once gave him the right hand of friendship and secured for him the good offices of his own faithful friends Messrs. Wiseman and Artwell.

The latter promised to ride over to Darley Manor and help to regulate the young man's household, and show him every possible attention. Ernest invited him to remain with him for a few days, as he himself would soon be leaving to accompany his sister to meet their father who was now in a distant city. He also invited his young kinsman to visit him in London.

Once again Ernest and Daisy bade farewell to Courtney Hall with its beautiful surroundings and beloved inmates and took their journey to the north where their father was anxiously awaiting them.

Once more Daisy stands in the dear old library and is clasped in her father's arms. Ernest received a warm and affectionate greeting, but was deeply grieved to see how aged and depressed he appeared. There was much to relate concerning what had taken place at the Hall, and, as before, his father approved of every part of the arrangements, but showed no further interest in anything. When Ernest spoke of the new found relative, Sir Philip Dalton, he then expressed a wish that Ernest would be a friend to the young man and help him to restore his home.

As soon as the travellers were refreshed and rested Mr. Dalton asked them to accompany him to their mother's grave. They gladly assented. There beneath the spreading branches of a sombre yew tree stood a handsome monument of pure white marble, bearing the simple inscription :

VIOLET,

THE BELOVED WIFE OF

PHILIP DALTON.

Washed in the blood of the Lamb."

They stood for a few moments engaged in pleasing reminiscences of the past, and though some tears fell

upon the sod that covered the form of the lovely sleeper, they were not tears of sorrow. For was she not sheltered forever from the storms of time?

The following morning Mr. Dalton appeared in very low spirits and notwithstanding the kind attentions of his host and the company of his beloved children his dejection increased.

Daisy immediately called upon her old friend the doctor, and anxiously inquired what he thought of her father.

As the doctor had met him several times during his stay in the city he was able to give his opinion. Looking at her with eyes full of sympathy he replied, "My dear Miss Daisy, the truth is, your honoured father's system has received such a shock that he will never recover. He has lost all energy and the springs of life are fast drying up. His term of life will not be very long, but constant care and change of scene may prolong his life for a season." Then taking her hand he raised it respectfully to his lips saying, "My dear young lady, the memory of your sainted mother is ever present with me, and whenever I enter a sick room I seem to hear the words she once addressed to me. 'Of all persons in the world doctors have the best opportunity to speak for the Lord.' I have tried to put that suggestion into practice and have been blessed for so doing."

The day following this conversation with the doctor the three were once more alone in the library. Mr.

Dalton told them he had settled all his worldly affairs, and he added sadly, "I feel that my life—so successful in the eyes of the world—in my own eyes has been a terrible failure. In the days of my youth through the loss of my home and inheritance and being deprived of what I valued still more—family affection—in my pride of heart I was determined to succeed, and God gave me the desire of my heart—wealth and fame. If I had listened to the pleadings of my dear old friend Judge Maxwell, and given my life to the Lord Jesus, I feel I might have prevented much that is past recall. Later on when I asked Him to heal my wounded spirit and accept the residue of life, even then I thought I could do much in His service, but I have learned that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. But for those two young fellows who found the Saviour in the prisoner's cell and blessed me with their latest breath, my crown would have been a starless one.

"I have also learned, since my arrival in the city, that from your mother's influence on her dying bed numbers have gone forth to a new life, and marvellous results have followed. I rejoice, my dear children, in your prosperity, but far more that you have both given your young lives to the service of the Lord. I feel sure you will be very successful, for He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Patient waiting for a time remains for me, then I shall join your beloved mother. There useless regrets will be at

an end, and my sorely stricken heart will be at rest."

Daisy, with the tenderest caresses, tried to comfort her father, remembering, too, what her friend, the doctor, had told her. She tried to cheer him by saying that in the sunny lands they would visit she hoped to see a measure of health and vigour return to him, assuring him that she was ready to start any time he wished. His answer was a sad, sweet smile.

The parting between father and son was a most touching scene. Each felt that it was their final one on earth.

Ernest knelt at his father's feet and craved his blessing. With swimming eyes Mr. Dalton replied, "I can but repeat the benediction breathed over you when an unconscious infant, by the dear old friend whose name you bear. May the Lord who hath redeemed my soul from death bless my beloved son. May your life be spent in His service, and may the generations yet unborn be blessed through your posterity."

That evening Ernest bade farewell to the home of his childhood and youth, his mother's grave, and his beloved sister, and as he clasped her in a last, fond embrace, she smiled through her fast falling tears, as she said, "Farewell for a season, my beloved brother. The possessions of our Master extendeth far and wide, and although oceans and continents divide us yet He still reigneth Lord over all."

With the prospect of meeting forever,
With the bright gates of heaven in view,
From the dearest on earth we may sever,
And smile a delightful adieu.

That same evening Ernest took the express for London and reached his lodging in safety. A few days later, Daisy with her father and their attendants, stood on the deck of a vessel bound for Italy, and bade, what proved to be, their final farewell to England.





CHAPTER XVIII.

RESULTS.

I bear the lamp my Master gave to me ;
Burning and shining must it ever be ;
And I must tend it till the night decay,
Till the day breaks and shadows flee away.

AND now let us pause for a moment to ask what set this vast machinery in motion, which included in its workings a great portion of the globe. In the days of Ahab, the wicked King of Israel, the whole nation was saved from destruction by the arising of a cloud no bigger than a man's hand ; now, it is the hand of a beautiful young girl, whose entire consecration to the service of God was honoured by unbounded success.

The tidings now reach us of the safe arrival of the missionaries in their far away home, where with increased facilities for opening up new stations, new victories would be accorded which would in truth prove a blessing to a rising generation, for there they would be taught those truths that bring light and liberty to the dark corners of the earth, hitherto too full of cruelty.

Through Italy, Germany, and all other countries through which they passed, Daisy and her father can be traced by the shining light which marks their pathway from the great metropolis of the world with its teeming millions. From numberless homes glad songs of praise and thanksgiving are wafted to Heaven from mouths hitherto full of cursing and bitterness, and not alone from the abodes of wretchedness, want and ignorance, but from the homes of the rich and noble of the great city where the clever and popular physician, Doctor Meredith, and his amiable wife were welcomed and honoured visitors.

We will now look for a moment into the northern city, the scene of Daisy's decision, where she formed the first small band of young Christian workers. To-day the city is one vast network of Christian enterprise and endeavour: mission rooms, where the Gospel is preached to the poor; night schools for young men whose days are spent in toil; homes for friendless girls, where they are safely sheltered from the temptations of the city and tenderly cared for by Christian matrons; mothers' meetings and sewing classes, temperance rooms and free libraries. Those and various other agencies are in full working order, and have been productive of great good among the people.

Ernest, with his time, his talents and wealth all devoted to the service of the Master, is honouring Him on every hand. The ladies of Courtney Hall



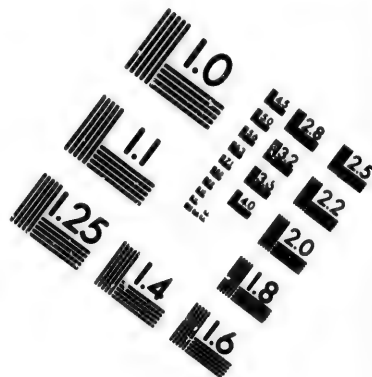
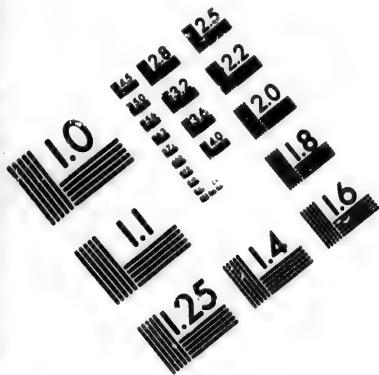
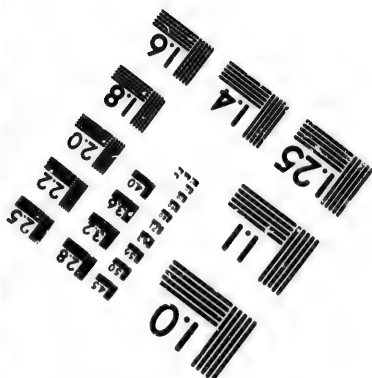
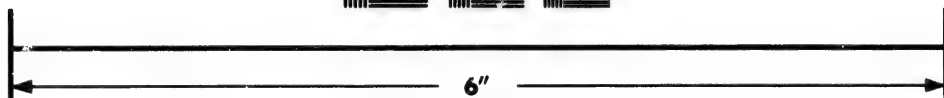
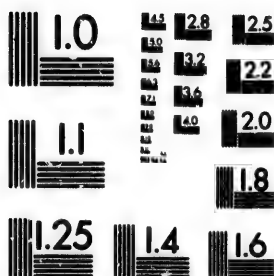


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still pursue their noble occupation of nursing back to life and health the weary and exhausted workers in the world's great harvest-field. One of the number has just returned to India, with health and strength renewed, thanking God with a glad heart for such an earthly paradise as Courtney Hall. Sir Philip Dalton has paid frequent visits to Ernest in London, and become deeply impressed with the pure unselfishness of his life, and he, too, took his stand as a Christian, and returned to Darley Manor, in very deed and truth, a new man; and "as a city set upon a hill cannot be hid," he also is taking an active part in this great spiritual enterprise.

More than two years have passed away since the great day of rejoicing at the Hall. Mr. Courtney is still as deeply interested as at first. Great success has followed him in every part of his work. He has returned from paying a visit to Darley Manor, and has conceived a great friendship for the young baronet to whom he has given a promise that his only remaining cousin, Rose Courtney, should some day become Lady Dalton. He is well pleased with the alliance.

After his return and having partaken of tea, though he is somewhat weary yet he cannot rest. He has vainly tried to compose his thoughts and stay at home for the evening, but he takes down his hat, then stands irresolute, but at last decides to pay a visit to Mrs. Meredith and acquaint her of her sister's

engagement. He had entered the house scarcely five minutes when the doctor came in. Grasping Ernest's hand he exclaimed, "I am glad to find you here. I have just come from your rooms and have been most anxious for your return. Come with me at once to a dying bed."

The two gentlemen entered the cab that was waiting at the door, and in a short time were standing in the sick-room beside a lady whose refined and still lovely features bore the unmistakeable stamp of death. It was the front room of a large tenement house, clean and comfortable, without any evidence of want or privation. A sad-looking, dark-eyed young person was in attendance. The doctor, taking the wasted hand of the dying lady, tenderly placed it in Mr. Courtney's, saying, "My dear madam, this is the gentleman of whom I spoke. Tell him your troubles, for, believe me, sorrow cannot long survive in his presence."

Looking earnestly at him she said, "The doctor, my only earthly friend, has bidden me place confidence in you as in an angel of light. My own sufferings will soon be over, for I fear not death, but I leave my dear and only child without one friend on whom she has any claim. I fear long, weary watching and working to supply me with every comfort has over-taxed her strength, and should she fall ill what will become of her? Oh, Lord, forgive a mother's anxious care for her precious daughter." She sank

back exhausted and gave an appealing look at the doctor, who at once made Ernest acquainted with her history. The sudden reverses of a day had left them homeless, and but for some articles of jewellery they were permitted to retain they would have been entirely destitute. The friends and relatives who had clustered around them in their days of prosperity did not recognize them now. For more than three years they had lived upon the sale of presents given to them in prosperous days, but for the last six months Alice had gone out as a daily governess and music teacher, and often she spent half the night doing fine fancy work while watching by her beloved parent—her only earthly treasure.

The dying mother's eyes often wandered toward the door, for it was time for Alice to return. The shades of death were fast closing around her.

Ernest hastened to calm her fears by assuring her that Dr. Meredith and himself would become Miss Lee's guardian, and that her future would be well cared for, adding, "Now, my dear madam, have you any other wish that can be gratified?"

She answered, "Could you lay me beside my dear husband in Greenwood cemetery?"

He replied, "It shall be done."

He gave her his hand which she pressed to her quivering lips, saying, "May the blessing of the God of the widow and fatherless be upon you. When I have once more kissed my darling I can die happy."

At this moment the door opened and Miss Lee entered the room, followed by the sad-looking young person who had been to summon her. She hastily took off her wraps, and just glancing at the gentlemen, exclaimed, "Oh! my darling mamma, is the cruel parting so near, and must you leave your Alice?" Sobbing violently she buried her face in the bed-clothing.

The dying mother laid her hand softly upon the shining curls that clustered around her fair forehead, saying, "Hold up your head, my Alice, and listen to me. How could I ever doubt that God would reward your loving care and unwearying attention through all the long months of suffering? Yes, truly He has raised up true friends in whose care I can leave my precious darling. Death is now robbed of all its terror."

Ernest thought the fair, sweet face all bathed in tears was the loveliest picture he had ever gazed upon.

Mrs. Lee continued, "To these two Christian gentlemen I commend you for protection, and so may our God deal with them as they care for the lonely orphan."

Dr. Meredith now presented Ernest, saying, "Miss Lee, this is Mr. Courtney, the ministerial friend of whom I was speaking."

A fair smile suffused her lovely face as she took his offered hand, remarking, "Fame has made me

acquainted with your name, but mamma and I have both had the privilege of hearing from your own lips the message of God to the weary and heavy laden. What you so earnestly recommended to your audience that night has indeed proved a balm to our sorrowing hearts and He has not forsaken us."

The mother's eyes brightened, and looking at Mr. Courtney she said with a faltering voice, "I did not recognize you as the bearer of the good tidings that brought us peace. But oh, my Father, I thank Thee for this new mercy."

Ernest tenderly pressed her hand, saying, "Dear madam, words fail to express what I feel. That my Master honoured me to be the bearer of His message to you, and as it has safely borne you over the stormy ocean of life, so surely will it bear you across the swelling of Jordan."

The doctor now said he must visit a patient and would call again in an hour.

Ernest, feeling that this last hour was too sacred to be intruded upon by strangers, quietly left the room. His mind was in a strange commotion. He wished to know more of Miss Lee's history, so was glad to see the attendant sitting in a small ante-room. She arose and silently beckoned him to come in, and asked in a voice choked with sobs if there was no hope.

Ernest answered, "No hope for this mortal life, but a sure and certain hope for the beautiful home beyond. I have left them together for a short time,

and now will you answer some questions? How long have you known those ladies? What is your connection with them? Are they very dear to you?"

She replied, while tears burst forth anew, "Dear to me, sir? For sweet Alice Lee I would lay down my life, for it belongs to her; she saved me, body and soul, from destruction. But I will tell you my painful story and then you will understand what she is to me. My name is Hetty Harrison. I am the youngest of a large family who are all well settled in life. I was brought up in a pretty country home, for my father is a market gardener. He loved me well, having me constantly with him and refusing me nothing. Oh! those were happy times among the fruits and flowers. But why dwell upon that which cannot be recalled? One fatal day a party of gentlemen visited the gardens. One of them soon came over to where I was standing while the others were enjoying and praising the neatness of the garden. He was pouring into my ear the most honeyed flattery; I was entirely fascinated, and he, seeing he had made an impression, again joined his party.

"My foolish young heart was an easy conquest, for I was madly in love with the handsome gentleman, and he soon engrossed the most of my thoughts. He quickly contrived to see me alone, and as he poured his burning protestations of undying love into my willing ear, I believed every word he said. In my innocence I told him he had better speak to my

parents who loved me too well to refuse me anything, but he smiled as he replied, 'Not yet, Hetty, it is too soon.'

"One day, in the course of conversation, I spoke warmly in his praise. My dear, far-seeing mother replied, 'Hetty, my dear child, that man has an evil eye and a wicked heart; you had better keep out of his way.' I knew in a moment that it would be useless to ask their consent, so I kept my love a secret.

"At last he asked me to consent to a private marriage, saying my parents would soon forgive me. I did not approve of the proposition but he soon put to flight all my scruples. Alas, sir, I listened to the voice of the tempter and fled with him to London. He must have been very sure of his victim for he had taken apartments and had a minister in readiness to perform the ceremony.

"I then wrote to my parents, begging their forgiveness, telling them that the step I had taken was necessary to my happiness. I received no answer, which was the beginning of my troubles. I had taken all the money I possessed, but that was quickly spent and I soon began to perceive a change in his conduct. It was not long before I bitterly repented of my folly. I grieved sorely that I received no answer from my parents, and this, together with his neglect, (that soon became actual cruelty), brought on a severe sickness, from which I slowly recovered to find myself deserted, my health injured and my spirits sorely depressed.

It took nearly all I possessed, even my scanty wardrobe, to pay for attendance during my illness.

"Before leaving the lodgings a note was brought to me by a stranger who left the house immediately. It was from my destroyer advising me to return to my parents, saying, that they would forgive me the holiday I had taken and I should be no worse for having seen a little of real life, adding, 'You are still Hetty Harrison; the good-natured minister who married us was a friend of mine got up for the occasion.'

"Oh! sir, words cannot describe the torture I endured, but I resolved my parents should never know the fate of their unhappy, wayward child. I left the house weak in body and my soul racked with the agony of remorse.

"I found I had yet a little money which had been overlooked, so, without any knowledge of my whereabouts, I wandered to this street. Faint and exhausted I stood and looked around, and seeing a card in a window, 'A small room to let,' my purpose was quickly formed—I would expend the few shillings left in paying rent for a couple of weeks in advance. There I could die and it would never be known who the unhappy victim of circumstances was.

"I carried out the first part of my purpose which left me a few pence, all that stood between me and starvation. I took possession of my attic and, faint with hunger, sat down to think. I remembered having passed a small confectioner's a few doors down

the street. Thither I turned my trembling footsteps, intending to make my last purchase. I laid my pence on the counter, asking the shopman to give me as much as he could for them. He looked pityingly at me, then filling a paper bag with stale buns handed them to me. I eagerly seized them and as I turned to reach the door I caught sight of a beautiful young lady who was buying fruit on the opposite side. Oh! how I envied her at that moment for my lips were parched with fever. As I passed through the door a half-starved, wretched-looking boy, whose nose had been flattened against the window, snatched my bag and in a moment was lost to sight in the crowd. A cry of despair broke from my lips, and the beautiful young lady was standing beside me asking what was the matter. 'My buns,' I cried. 'He has stolen them and they were all I had in the world.'

"She replied in tones of softest pity that seemed to me like heaven's own music, 'Do not cry, dear, I will replace your loss. No doubt the poor boy was very hungry.'

"She re-entered the shop and quickly returned with a parcel, saying, 'This is for you, but I will carry it, for I am stronger than you, so lean on my arm and show me where you live.'

"A few steps brought us to the door, and as I stopped before it she looked at me in glad surprise, saying, 'Is this your home? Why! I live here.' She would not permit me to leave her until tea was over.

Though I felt much refreshed, yet I could give no answer to the tender inquiries of Miss Lee and her mother concerning my evident misery. So taking me by the hand Miss Lee said, 'Now, you must show me your room, then I will know where to find you.' When we reached the poor little attic, which was all I could call home, she looked around her in dismay, and turning upon me her lovely eyes full of tears, she asked, 'My poor girl, how do you live in this wretched place? I have known sore trouble and great sorrow; can you not tell me yours? I may be able to assist you.' Misery had made my heart hard and bitter, but her sweet, tender pity touched me deeply. I burst into tears. She passed her arm soothingly around me, and hiding my face upon her shoulder among her shining curls, I told her my sad story.

"She mingled her tears of sympathy with mine of shame and sorrow, saying, 'Oh! Hetty, yours are indeed cruel wrongs, which none but the Almighty God can avenge. Oh! seek His forgiveness for your other faults, for He will surely hold you guiltless of this last shocking fraud of which you are the victim.'

"She stood silent for a few moments, then smiling through her tears she said, 'my poor Hetty, we can help each other; listen to me. My dear mother is growing very weak. It causes me great uneasiness because I have to leave her alone much longer than I should. Could you not stay and attend to her wants in my absence? I could then take more pupils, and

this would be food and shelter for you with true friends. This is all I can offer at present, Hetty ; shall it be so ?' I tried to speak, but sobs and tears choked my utterance, but Miss Lee understood.

"My miserable little attic was at once exchanged for this neat little room. In striving to do my best I have been enabled, in a measure, to forget my own sorrows, and now, sir, do you wonder that they are all the world to me ?"





CHAPTER XIX.

ALICE LEE.

"My times are in Thy hand ; the night, the day,
The moon's pale glimmering, and the sunny ray,
Are Thine ; and Thine the midnight of the grave ;
Oh ! be Thou there to strengthen and to save,
To light death's valley with Thy beam of love,
And smile a welcome to Thy throne above."

MR. COURTNEY listened very attentively as Hetty continued. "I fear Miss Lee's health is breaking down, for she often works late into the night." Ernest's heart gave a great throb as he thought of the midnight toiler, and a purpose was quickly being formed. "Hetty," he asked hurriedly, "can you tell me, is Miss Lee bound by any engagement? It is of the greatest importance I should know."

She answered quickly, "She is perfectly free in the sense you mean. She has sometimes spoken of her past life, and of the gentlemen who paid her attentions in the days of her prosperity, but who in her need had forgotten her name. Then she would remark, 'Oh ! Hetty, I am happy to know, not one ever found a place in my heart.'"

Mr. Courtney arose for he heard the doctor's footsteps at the door, and putting a bank-note in Hetty's hand, he said, "This is for your present needs, I am Miss Lee's guardian for the future, and your faithful services shall not be forgotten ; but allow me to communicate with your sorrowing parents ! There will be no necessity for you to leave your friend."

She had just given her consent, as Dr. Meredith entered, and she heard her own name softly spoken.

They entered the sick-room together and stood around the death-bed. Very calm and peaceful was that death-bed scene.

Alice was supporting her dying mother. One more look at the sweet tearful face and quivering lips and Ernest's resolution was taken. Stepping to her side he asked, "Miss Lee, will you allow me to take your place ? There is something I wish to say to your mother."

He tenderly placed his arm around the dying lady and Alice moved to one side. He bent down close to her ear and said a few words in low soft tones. The watchers could not comprehend the vast importance of those low-spoken words, but the dying mother understood them, and she turned her eyes, now growing dim, full upon the speaker, as if to read the inmost recesses of his heart. She seemed satisfied, and from her lips dropped the dear name, "Alice."

In a moment she was close to her mother's side, and Mrs. Lee feebly grasping Alice's hand placed it in Mr.

Courtney's, closing her trembling fingers over both she whispered, "May the blessing of the Lord Almighty rest upon you both, my children. I am now going home." With their hands still clasped in hers and without one sigh she entered into perfect rest beyond.

They both dropped on their knees by the bedside and were silent for some minutes. Then raising her gently in his arms he asked, "Miss Lee, can you ratify the promise made by your departing mother? Will you give me a husband's right to love and protect you? No thought of love ever found a place in my heart till I met you this evening. Can you satisfy the craving for pure human love which you have awakened in my heart, or must there remain a void that no other can fill? Will you answer me in the presence of this dear sleeper? Can you give me your undivided affection?"

When Miss Lee could command her voice sufficiently to speak she asked, "Did my mother quite understand you?"

He replied, "Yes, and gave you into my keeping with her blessing."

Miss Lee replied, "Oh! Mr. Courtney, what shall I say to you? It is all so sudden and so strange, but I can answer you truly, none other has any claim on me or share in my affections." She paused as if speaking to herself, "Yes, I feel I need a true friend and protector." With the tears flowing over her lovely face she gave him her hand.

He tenderly pressed it, then raised it to his lips saying, "Here in the presence of Almighty God, who has conquered death, do we seal our life-long compact."

He then presented her to his friend the doctor, who was inwardly rejoicing that what he had so earnestly desired had come to pass.

In a short time Mr. Courtney bade his betrothed and her humble friend "Good-night."

Two days later the remains of Mrs. Lee were laid to rest beside her husband in the beautiful Greenwood Cemetery, a few miles from London.

Miss Lee and Hetty Harrison became the guests of Dr. and Mrs. Meredith. In about a week there was a very quiet wedding in the presence of Dr. and Mrs. Meredith and the faithful Hetty. Alice Lee became the bride of Ernest Courtney, the popular preacher, the friend of the widow and orphan, and the uplifter of the lower classes of the people.

Alice's happiness was complete. She had listened only once to his earnest pleadings, yet she had often thought of the handsome, eloquent young minister and wondered what his home would be if he should find a woman worthy of the rich treasure of his love. No knowledge ever came to her that she was the wife of the wealthy squire of Courtney Hall, for none but Dr. and Mrs. Meredith knew the facts and they had faithfully kept the trust reposed in them.

The faithful Hetty accompanied them to Ernest's modest lodgings. Though reconciled to her parents

and happy in their forgiveness nothing could have induced her to leave her friend and preserver. Although her own life had been so cruelly blighted there was no envy in her heart, but she rejoiced that the one who had preserved her from a terrible end had found the green pastures of perfect peace, even the peace of God that passeth all understanding as well as the strong pure love of a noble heart.

Yes, Alice was indeed supremely happy, and so several months passed away.

One night as Ernest and his friend had been paying some late visits together, and were about to part, the doctor laid his hand on Ernest's shoulder saying, "Ernest, my dear friend, my more than brother, our companionship has been very sweet and I shall sorely miss you, but the claims of family and society are upon you. Do not neglect them, but take your lovely wife to Courtney Hall. Let your child first see the light in your ancestral home. Justice requires it for yourselves, your children, and your tenantry. The public, too, has its claims upon you as a country gentleman. Your work here need not be neglected for you can make some worthy man happy by putting him in your place. Do not delay, my dear friend, for a sudden surprise, even though it be a joyful one, may prove injurious to Mrs. Courtney.

Ernest eagerly grasped his friend's hand, saying, "Among the many rich blessings God has bestowed upon me, I value very highly your disinterested friend-

ship and faithful counsels. I thank you for reminding me of claims that shall receive immediate attention."

Mrs. Courtney was waiting up for her husband's return, though it was later than usual. As she stepped forward to greet him he clasped her in his arms, saying, "My sweet Alice, I think it is quite time I gave you that bridal trip so long promised. Can you be ready in a few days to accompany me into the country?"

She expected her husband was about to make some change in his work, so answered readily, "Oh! yes, I can be ready any time, country or city are both alike to me, for it is your presence that gives me the most perfect confidence." Then winding her soft white arms around his neck, and hiding her blushing face upon his bosom, she said, "My beloved Ernest, there is something I want to tell you, I have often tried but failed."

Ernest replied, "But you will tell me now, my own Alice?"

Raising her shining eyes to his face, she asked, "Did you not tell me you loved me the first time you saw me?"

Ernest smiled and replied, "Yes, my dear little wife, three of the master passions of the human heart took possession of me. First, admiration, then pity, then all-conquering love prompted me to what must have appeared to you a very strange proceeding."

She replied, "I suppose that you thought it was my

friendless condition that caused me to accept your proposal so readily; but you did not know how often you seemed to be present with me in my midnight vigils, beside my suffering mother, and the pleasure it gave me to hear of your success among the people. I had no hope of ever seeing you again. As mother grew weaker, I spent all the time I could spare from my pupils with her; but I often pictured to myself the happy home yours would be, and wondered who would be the favoured lady who would be so happy as to possess the priceless treasure of your love."

Ernest listened to his wife's confession, then fondly kissing her, he replied, "And now you are intimately acquainted with that lady; and now my own precious wife let us both thank our divine and blessed Master that he has so richly filled our lives with His best gifts: His own love divine, eternal, unchangeable; and true, pure, sanctified human love.

All necessary preparations were soon made for leaving London. Rose's marriage with Sir Philip Dalton would take place the same day on which the squire brought home his wife.

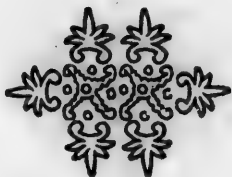
Ernest had presented his successor with all that belonged to himself at his lodgings, and bidding adieu to the scene of his labours, in company with Dr. and Mrs. Meredith and Hetty, commenced their journey to Courtney Hall.

Mrs. Courtney had asked no questions, believing her

husband was going to take charge of some country work.

The tenants were overjoyed that their landlord and squire was bringing home his wife, and they were determined to give him a right royal welcome.

They met the bridal party at the church, where Squire Courtney gave into the keeping of Sir Philip Dalton the blooming Rose.





CHAPTER XX.

COURTHAMPTON.

WE will leave the bridal party for a while while we describe Courthampton. It was a village, and stood in a lovely valley about a mile from the mansion. Bounded on one side by the beautiful woods and groves which surround the private pleasure-grounds of the Hall, on the other side stretched a long chain of lovely green meadows, through which ran the river Derwent, shining like a thread of silver in the distance, as it wound its way around a curve.

Beneath the drooping willows, that fringed the river's brink lay numerous flocks of sheep, chewing the cud of perfect contentment, their snowy fleeces contrasting strikingly with the soft bright green of the meadows, bringing vividly to mind "The green pastures beside the still waters," promised to the weary sons and daughters of Adam when the toils and sorrows of this mortal life are over, if the tasks allotted in life have been faithfully performed.

With the exception of two or three of the better houses, the whole village belongs to the lord of the

manor. Mr. Wiseman is the owner of one of these, a pretty villa, surrounded by a miniature shrubbery and well-kept gardens.

The cottages of the labourers were all well-built and comfortable, each having a large strip of ground for cultivation, which proved no mean item in the cottager's bill of fare.

The church was a very ancient edifice, dating back to the old Norman period, built of stone, with a low square tower, narrow mullioned windows, with small diamond-shaped panes, over which the dark green ivy persistently crept till the light within had well nigh turned to shadows.

The old grave-yard was shaded by several grand old patriarchs of the forest, standing in stately majesty, as if keeping guard over the sacred relics of by-gone generations slumbering peacefully beneath their shade; some, whose very names had become extinct in the old weather-beaten, mossy head-stones, that had long ago marked the resting-place of some loved one.

The vicarage was one of more modern architecture, with its white stone front, its well-kept flower beds, with its neat edgings of box and yew trees, trimmed into various fantastic shapes. It presented a pleasant contrast to the old grey church.

It was quoted as a model village, for there was work and food for all. But the Green was the pride of the villagers; situated just in the centre of the village.

It was a large square of the old primeval forest, thickly studded with chestnut, oak and elm, whose wide-spreading branches intermingled as if in loving intercourse with each other. Rude seats had been erected under the trees, and here the aged people spent much of their time in summer weather talking over the days gone by, and watching the merry gambols of the troops of children who spent much of their time on the Green. Here the bread-winners of the village would meet in the evening to discuss the state of the crops and tell the news of the day.

There was one inn called "The Courtney Arms," used mostly by the gentlemen who visited at the Hall.

At this time, about fifty years ago, there were no schools in many of the country villages. There was a public Grammar School in the small market town, a couple of miles on the other side of the Hall, but only two or three of the best families thought of sending their sons there, so, notwithstanding the general prosperity, most of the young people of the village grew up in ignorance. This was the state of affairs at the time of Ernest's grandfather; but during the thirty years of the late squire's possession neglect and oppression had produced a sad change. The fertile fields had been trampled by the hunters, the crops damaged, and fences broken down. The tenantry could get no redress but abuse from the squire and threats of a higher rent. In severe cases of sickness no help came from the Hall. Soon, many of the men

became discontented and began to lounge around "The Courtney Arms" to the evident annoyance of the landlord, who informed them that his house was for gentlemen and not for lazy vagabonds.

The squire was appealed to in this matter, and as a higher rent was offered he consented to open a public house for the accommodation of the poor men of the village. Another sign bearing the inscription "The Farmer's Rest" soon swung at right angles from "The Courtney Arms."

From that day the prosperity and respectability of the village rapidly declined. The fields were neglected, debts were contracted. Many of the men became idle and dissipated; the women dirty and quarrelsome; the children ragged and often hungry. In some cases everything of any value had passed into the keeping of the landlord of "The Farmer's Rest."

Frequently the Green was the scene of very disgraceful conflicts. One precious life had been lost in a drunken brawl, and the widow and children left to battle with want and misery.

No one from the Hall, except some of the servants, had attended service at the old church for several years, for the unhappy Lady Courtney and her daughters lived in the strictest seclusion.

Such was the terrible condition of Courthampton when it came into the possession of our young friend Ernest.

A few of the worst characters had refused to go to

the Hall to meet the new squire, but adjourned to their favourite retreat to talk over their grievances. But, in the hearts of all who had been present and heard the young squire's encouraging words, the hopes of better times had sprung up. The cheer upon the Green had speedily brought their fellows from "The Farmer's Rest," and as several began to speak in praise of the new landlord, those already infuriated with drink began to bet upon what he would and would not do, and many threats were uttered of what would be the consequence if he followed in his uncle's footsteps.

There was a variety of opinions, and as is often the case, angry words were followed by blows. One of the most disgraceful sights that can offend the eye was being enacted on the village Green just as the young squire accompanied by Mr. Artwell walked past.

Ernest stood for a moment to enquire the cause, then passed on without any remonstrance and the fight still went on.

He found the church very much out of repair. The cottages of many of the workingmen were in ruins. It was a sad sight to behold.

After his return to the Hall, Ernest, with his two trusty friends and helpers, sat late into the night forming and arranging plans for reclaiming and restoring the condition of the old church and the village.

Now for the next few months the village was the scene of the greatest excitement and activity. Everybody was busy. The causes of their degradation and misery were speedily removed and the men became once more sober and industrious.

The cottages were repaired, the gardens cultivated, the old church restored and beautified, and now filled on the Sabbath day. The spot where "The Farmer's Rest" stood was built up with a row of pretty cottages known as the "Courtney Alms House," where the aged poor of the village were accommodated and everything necessary for their comfort was provided. The widow of Dick Saunders, who lost his life on the Green, was provided with a comfortable allowance.

The opposite corner, where for long years the sign of the "Courtney Arms" had swung and creaked in the summer breeze and the wintry winds, had become transformed as if by magic into a very pretty residence for a new schoolmaster and his wife. A little lower down stood a handsome new block of buildings, consisting of separate schools for the boys and girls of the village.

On the other side of the street stood a long neat one-story building. A row of shining gothic windows looked out on the street, and another on the green meadows and sparkling river. This was a public library and reading-room, well supplied with good, sound reading matter to suit the capability or intelligence of the people. Also all kinds of writing

material were supplied. It was opened for the purpose of giving instruction to the young men and maidens who had grown up in ignorance. When it was completed, Ernest, accompanied by his friend the doctor, came down, bringing the schoolmaster and teachers with them, and formally opened the new buildings. They were all earnestly entreated to make use of the privileges placed within their reach, and as far as possible to redeem the past.

A few months before the squire's marriage, in a letter written to Mr. Wiseman, Daisy expressed a wish to do something to give pleasure to her brother's tenantry. She knew their wants were well supplied, but she wished to give them an extra enjoyment.

She commissioned the lawyer to ascertain if any of the young men of the village possessed any talent for music, and if so to procure them proper instruments and instruction. So, shortly after the lawyer, accompanied by his trusty ally, Mr. Artwell, walked through the Green, feeling sure that the talent of the village would be found there.

Daisy's loving message was delivered and hailed with delight, and a hearty cheer given for the absent Daisy.

Strange sounds came from beneath the wide-spreading chestnuts, to the great amusement of the bystanders.

The steward often paid them a visit and encouraged them by his presence.

As they all had one purpose in view, they tried their best, and success crowned their efforts, to the unbounded satisfaction of the villagers.

A band of young men was soon selected, and began their practice.





CHAPTER XXI.

CONCLUSION.

Oh, life is precious,—it has links of gold,
Binding us ever with their magic might,
And it has wealth, that never can be told ;
Lodged within noble hearts, that love the right,
And tireless strivings, in the cause of good,
And strong affections for the brotherhood.
Oh ! life is precious.

THE ceremony being over the bridal party leave the church, Mrs. Courtney still thinking that the glad rejoicings of the throng who accompanied them with fluttering banners and waving pennons, and the merry music of the brass band, and the joyous ringing of the church bells was all in honour of the newly-wedded pair. But at length, her eye caught the mingling of their names in the floral decorations intersected among the foliage of a grand triumphal arch that once more spanned the great gates of the porter's lodge, was, in bright crimson blossoms the "Welcome to Ernest and Alice." Turning to her husband, she asked, as her lips grew pale, "Ernest,

what does it all mean ? There must be some great mistake ; I do not understand."

He replied " My sweet Alice, there is no mistake. I am just what you know me to be, Ernest Courtney, a humble servant of the Lord Jesus, but at the same time I am master of Courtney Hall. This is our home, and this our 'Welcome.' Now we must respond to their greeting, for they love me well, and they will soon love you for your own sake as well as mine."

As the procession neared the gates, the band moved on, and formed in front. At a given sign from the steward, they began to play "See, the Conquering Hero Comes." Ernest sprang to his feet in the carriage, and would have stopped them, but no—they had been practising for months for this very joyful occasion, so they continued to play lustily till the grand entrance was reached, and as he handed his wife from the carriage, a mighty cheer rang through the air.

The burly old farmer that proposed the first cheer on the village green, now dressed in broadcloth, looking like a fine old English gentleman, stepped forward and making a low bow, begged the squire's forgiveness for disregarding his orders, for was he not a nobler hero than many who returned crowned with victorious laurels from slaughtering their fellow-creatures ? Yes, he was their hero. Had he not fought a great battle and conquered many grievous evils that existed among them before his coming, and

with one accord they gave him and his lady ten thousand welcomes to their home, and prayed God to grant them many years of happiness among them.

Ernest's emotion was very great as he lifted his hat and thanked them all for such a marked display of regard as they had shown him. He told them he had simply tried to do his duty. He was very thankful for the good results that had followed. He wished them all to try and spend a very happy day, but his voice grew husky as he said, "There is but one drawback to our happiness—the absence of my dear sister. It is to her influence we owe any good there is found in us, for she first showed me my responsibilities as a man. My honoured father's health is fast failing and she could not leave him, but the Lord she so early chose and so faithfully served is with her, and whithersoever she goes she carries the light."

After one more cheer for the good and beautiful Daisy and a hearty "God bless her," the throng dispersed to prepare for feasting and merriment.

Mr. Courtney then led his wife into the library where Lady Courtney, Sir Philip and Lady Dalton, Dr. and Mrs. Meredith, Mr. and Mrs. Wiseman, the steward and his wife, and several friends were waiting to receive them. Ernest gave a general introduction and then presented his wife to Lady Courtney, saying, "Dear Aunt Eleanor, I have brought you a daughter in place of the one I this morning gave away."

She took the trembling figure in her motherly arms

and tenderly kissed the pale cheek, saying in a low, earnest tone, "God has been very good to you, my dear, in giving you such a noble husband, but you need a mother's love and care and it shall be yours."

After a few more words had been exchanged with the rest of the company, Lady Courtney led the trembling Alice to her own apartments for rest and quiet, while the squire and his friends mingled for a time with the tenantry.

After Mrs. Courtney had taken some hours repose and quiet, she began to realize what a new and important position she had to fill.

Ernest accompanied her to enjoy the beauties of the surrounding scenery and to witness the pleasure of the happy tenants. The large crowd of juveniles were almost wild with delight, for the ladies and gentlemen took part in their innocent amusements. The older people were sitting or reclining on the soft, green carpet, which nature had provided, beneath the shadow of the trees, chatting merrily.

From among the laurels came frequent peals of merry laughter as the young men and maidens stood in groups or paired off into some pleasant walk.

From another part of the grounds, concealed by luxuriant evergreens, came the sweet sounds of music, to the evident astonishment of the numerous song birds who ceased their own melody and turned their heads to listen.

Later on Ernest led his wife to a lovely grotto

where the murmuring waterfall trickled over blocks of rugged granite into a white marble basin below. The grotto was a gem, for art and nature blended together in perfect harmony.

Mrs. Courtney stood and gazed, spell-bound, then turning to her husband she exclaimed, "Oh! surely when fresh from the hands of her Creator in the garden of Eden, our mother Eve could not be as supremely happy as I am."

Ernest turned upon his wife a look of intense satisfaction as he asked, "Why not, Alice? Our mother Eve's possessions were similar to yours, for she had, like you, her God, her husband and her home."

The long, bright day once more came to a close—a day of pure and unbroken enjoyment; a day to be observed as a general holiday for some time.

Now came the parting between Lady Courtney and her youngest daughter. This was not a painful parting as they would see each other very frequently, but as the sisters, Rose and Clara, kissed each other, it was with overflowing eyes and thankful hearts, for, though the morning of their lives had been overcast with clouds of sorrow, yet their Sun had risen in splendour and now shone brightly upon this earthly pathway.

Hetty Harrison, shortly after taking up her residence at Courtney Hall, became the possessor of considerable wealth through the death of an uncle, but she still remained at the Hall and had developed into

a noble and beautiful woman, though her countenance always bore a shade of sadness. She was known to the world as the faithful and esteemed friend of the good and beautiful lady of Courtney Hall.

After a few years had rolled away, while on a visit to Dr. Meredith's, in London, Hetty was invited to attend the court house in company with some ladies. One of the most daring profligates of the times was that day to stand his trial, having, like the serpent of old, crept into many happy homes and allured many innocent Eves from the garden of peace and purity to the wilderness of black despair, disgrace, and ofttimes death.

His last victim, a beautiful but friendless girl, would not be shaken off, but persistently followed his footsteps. She had been found dead and justice was soon on his track. This day would decide his fate.

As the prisoner was brought in, heavily ironed and strongly guarded, and took his place in the dock, all eyes were turned upon him. Hetty Harrison shuddered as she recognized the handsome villain as Edward Egerton, who had lured her from her happy home to become a victim of a sham marriage, of cruelty and desertion. She well knew that but for sweet Alice Lee her wrongs would have ended in death. She quickly regained her composure and kept her seat.

Once or twice during the trial he had turned his eyes in that direction.

The examination was soon over; the verdict was wilful murder. The sentence of death was passed without hope of mercy.

As the guards were about to remove him he asked for paper and pencil. It was brought and with the manacles on his wrist he wrote a few words which he gave to a guard for Miss Harrison. The note ran thus: "Hetty Harrison, you are avenged. You are beautiful and rich and innocent, while I die on the scaffold. Ten thousand curses called down on my head, but God is just. Farewell forever." Hetty's experience was a very painful one, she was sought by good and worthy men, but the sad memory of the past proved an effectual barrier between her and another connection. She spent her life amidst the peaceful scenes of the home of her preserver to whom she clung with truest affection.

Lady Courtney was a frequent visitor at Darley Manor and was truly happy in witnessing the happiness of her children, but she continued to make her home at Courtney Hall, for there she had come a happy bride, there she had lived a neglected wife and sorrowful mother, and there too she had been lifted from the darkest dungeon of despair to liberty, life and love, both human and divine. She spent there the remainder of her life in happy companionship and peaceful enjoyment.

Of the squire it may be truly said, his wife was as the fruitful vine, his children as the olive branches.

round about his table. Yea, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord, blest with several noble sons and fair daughters. Ernest remembered how the unjust partiality of his grandparents had embittered his father's whole life, so he resolved to steer clear of the dangerous rock on which so many families suffer domestic shipwreck.

Alice who had been brought up in the lap of luxury and suddenly brought low with none but herself to support and comfort her beloved and suffering mother, yet with sweet submission she kissed the rod and had bravely met all changes. She had her reward, for never was wife and mother and friend more beloved, honoured and esteemed.

The squire did not forget his flock, but often paid a visit to his friends and cousins, Dr. and Mrs. Meredith, who enjoyed a full share of prosperity and happiness.

Courtney Hall was still the resting-place of the weary, and a refuge for those soldiers of the cross who retired for a time worn out with hard fighting. So, honoured by God and esteemed by men, they passed into good old age. Many of their sons and daughters took their places in the Lord's vineyard in different parts of the world, so diffusing the light of the Gospel from the rivers to the end of the earth.

We will now return to Daisy, our first acquaintance, who with her father travelled through many lands. She had mastered several of the different languages so

that she could converse with the people. No hour of her life was wasted. She began and built up several agencies for the diffusion of the truths of the Gospel, and when her living presence had departed her influence was still felt ever widening and expanding.

Shortly after the news of Ernest's marriage had reached them, Mr. Dalton expressed a wish to visit the Holy Land and to find a resting-place in the soil so often pressed by the feet of the sinner's Friend. They commenced their journey and continued by easy stages.

In an ancient city where they lingered for a month, Daisy made the acquaintance of an eminent lecturer, a German of noble birth and brilliant talents and fine manly bearing. He had left his home in charge of a younger brother and had travelled far and wide at his own expense dispensing light and truth and proclaiming liberty to the captives fast bound in the slavery of sin.

Like Daisy he had early consecrated his all to the Heavenly King. Their acquaintance soon developed into a warm friendship and still later into love. Daisy at last had found a kindred spirit.

He accompanied them to Palestine, and Mr. Dalton readily gave his consent to their union. His own health was failing fast and she would need a friend and protector in a strange land. They were soon married and took up their abode in a beautiful villa overlooking the Jordan, where the rich fruits and flowers

grew in great abundance. In a latticed summer-house, where clinging vines and fragrant roses entwined in loving companionship, Mr. Dalton spent much of his time.

The year following her marriage one tender little Violet was given to Daisy, but like all blossoms of that name, it soon slept beneath the sod, and the grandfather failed very rapidly after the sweet babe was taken away. One lovely balmy afternoon Daisy was sitting in the summer-house watching the fitful slumbers of her father, her thoughts far away across the sea. He suddenly opened his eyes and fixing them lovingly upon her he exclaimed, "My precious Daisy, for so long my dear comforter and patient companion, the end is very near. Oh! may the richest blessing that the eternal God hath in His storehouse of blessing be poured upon the head of the most devoted and faithful of daughters. Oh! what tidings I shall carry to your glorified mother of her children. I leave my dying blessing for my noble son, and now I go to join that great company your mother saw coming from all nations and people and tongues."

He now fell into a peaceful slumber and after watching him for some minutes she softly left the summer-house.

In half an hour she returned. Her father had changed his position.

As he reclined on his cushions, a tender branch of the encircling roses, which had long since found its

way through the trellis-work, and flourished in the cool shade, was drooping its sweet blossoms as in a loving caress over his upturned face. The good old gardener's words were verified, for he had in truth died among the roses; and his spirit had entered through the gates into the city where the weary are forever at rest.

He was laid to sleep beside the tiny grave he had so often visited beneath the shade of a wide spreading cedar, where the birds made sweet melody among the branches, and the air was laden with rich fragrance of the spices that flourished in great variety around the villa.

In the course of time other children were given to Daisy for a while. Then she laid them to sleep beneath the cedar.

Do not think that because Daisy was wealthy, she had no sorrows. Ah! no. In her early maidenhood she experienced the keenest anxiety, lest her beloved mother should become engulfed in the whirlpool of fashionable dissipation.

How often, think you, did that daughter's tender heart ache with sorrow, to see that mother, so long a helpless invalid; then, to lose her just at the time when a mother's counsels are so necessary to a young girl.

Again, the secret sorrow of her father's life called forth her deepest sympathy.

For years she travelled through distant lands, among

strangers, for his sake. Though she never murmured, her thoughts often wandered back to her native land.

When she lost the parent she so tenderly loved and so devotedly cherished, although she missed him sorely she could not mourn for him, for she well knew that the wounds inflicted in youth had never healed. When he became a Christian the shadow still remained. Now the aching heart was at rest forever, for he had joined his beloved wife.

As the Master called for her tender buds of promise and transplanted them to the Paradise above to bloom forever in His presence, who said "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," she patiently bore her loss and meekly kissed the rod that smote her.

As time rolled on and other children came to stay and brighten their home, each one was dedicated to their parent's God. How lovingly she watched over them, and how wisely she trained and prepared them for the Master's service!

Again, the Lord of the harvest called for her noble husband to rest from his labours, just in the heat of the day, in the promise of his manhood. As he clasped her hand in a last loving pressure, while a holy light beamed from his eyes, he whispered softly, "It is all right, my beloved Daisy. My work on earth is finished and He is calling me home just a little before. There are other duties for you to perform, then will come the reward of the faithful."

Even in this last and final bereavement, the Friend

and Guide of her youth was close at hand to impart the promised strength. And grace was given her to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, but blessed be His name forever."

Another grave was added to those beneath the wide-spreading cedar, and there in close companionship lie father, husband and children.

The spot became very dear to Daisy; she spent much of her time beneath the cedar, and the blessed memories of the past that hung around those hallowed graves formed a strong cord of love, that as a golden chain bound her to the land of her adoption.

Daisy never returned to her native land. In her far away home she still lives, and the promise, "Even to hoary hairs will I carry thee," has been verified.

The evening of her life is calm and peaceful, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, who will rise up and call her blessed, and all down through the ages to the end of time, this blessed influence will expand and increase, till at the trumpet's call all the nations of the earth shall assemble before the great white throne. As the glorified blood-washed throng from all nations, people and tongues, strike their golden harps and fill heaven's lofty arches with glad songs of praise to Him that loved us and gave His life for us, how many in that vast assembly will thank God to all eternity for

Hail, royal daughter of the Eternal King,
Whose feet long time life's rugged paths have trod ;
Even as the day's decline doth evening bring,
So turns thy spirit home to meet its God.

The checkered scenes of life will soon be o'er,
Its varied joys and sorrows all be passed ;
Full soon thy keel will touch the golden shore,
And safe in port, the anchor drop at last.

There in thy blood-washed bridal garments clad ;
Thy lamp well trimmed and brightly burning found,
Calm be thy entrance to thy heavenly rest ;
Thy head with richest jewels there be crowned.



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